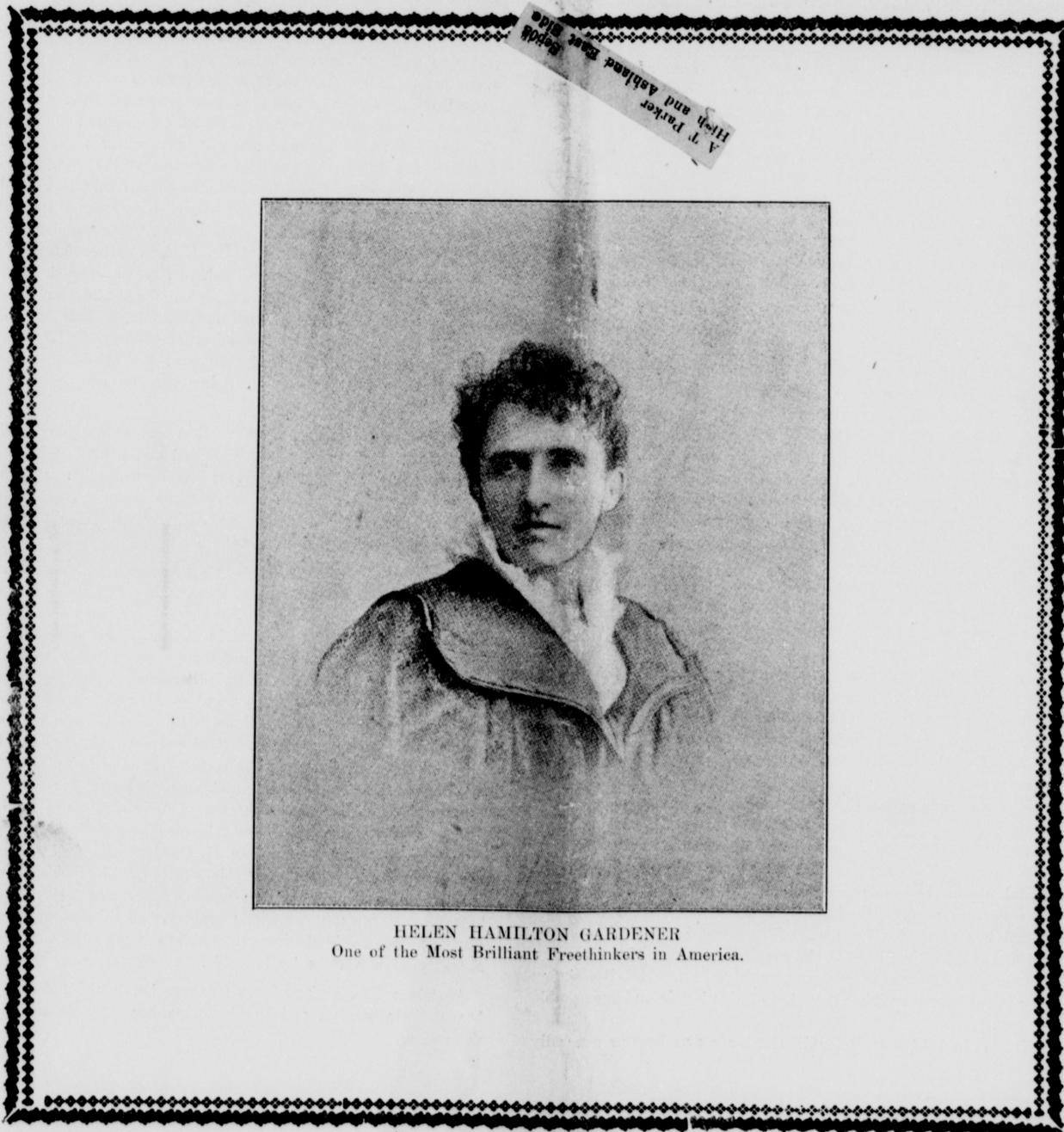


BLUE GRASS BLADE

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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



HELEN HAMILTON GARDENER
One of the Most Brilliant Freethinkers in America.

HELEN HAMILTON GARDENER

ORATOR, NOVELIST, AND FOREMOST AMONG FREE-THOUGHT WOMEN.

Who has not heard or read of Helen H. Gardener?

Without a thought or dream of name and fame this American woman has moved a continent to thought and reflection.

“Men, Women and Gods” was the title of one of her most famous works, and did we but consider the author alone we would be impelled to admit that the greatest of these was the woman who first penned the title.

Slight of frame, of delicate physique, with classical head and face, yet a strong, logical and vigorous thinker, her every mood a lesson, pure in thought as the polar snows, and self-poised as a star, she stands the admiration of every Freethinker in the civilized world, an inspiration to all who follow, and a beacon-light along the dark highways and by-ways that have been builded by theology.

Helen Hamilton Gardener was born in the valley of Virginia, at Stony Mead, near Winchester, in 1860, just before the outbreak of the Civil War. She was the youngest of six children. Radical as she afterwards became, it is a notorious fact that her father was a minister of the gospel, the Rev. A. T. Chenoweth. Her mother, Katherine A. Peel, was a descendant of the Robert Peel family, now famous in the political history of England. Owing to the existence of Southern institutions at the time of her birth, and just prior thereto, her parents inherited a number of slaves, but taking note of the abolition movement, and being deeply impressed therewith, they liberated their bondsmen and bondwomen, but created such a feeling of hostility by so doing that they moved to the North in order to avoid unpleasant difficulties. Thus it was that born of the South, Helen H. Gardener grew to womanhood among the people of the North, and her strong literary mind began to develop at a rather early age.

It is a safe assertion that no literary works published in the English, or any other language, have exercised such an influence upon the public mind as that of her two novels: “Is This Your Son, My Lord,” and “Pray You, Sir, Whose Daughter.” Both of these works dealt with the prevailing social system, the evils with which the young were beset, the traps for unwary feet, built by special legislation, carried into law by unthinking legislators. The sarcasm with which she exposes these brutal social shams had deep and wonderful effect. Her polished satire struck deep. Her intense earnestness appealed to all who heard her or read after her. She never juggled with words. At no period of her life did she ever try to conceal her thoughts. There is no heart so utterly unresponsive as would fail of being impressed by the striking thoughts of this heroic and remarkable woman.

It was in 1884 that Helen H. Gardener first became generally

known to the reading, thinking public of America. Her introduction came through a series of lectures she then delivered. Among these were “Men, Women and Gods,” “Pulpit, Pew and Cradle,” “Vicarious Atonement,” “Rome or Reason,” and others. All of the above named lectures were published in book form, and they reached an enormous sale. For the next six years she engaged in a vigorous work to enlighten the masses. She lectured frequently and many of her writings found their way into the columns of the best magazines of the country. In 1890 she published her first book of stories, entitled “A Thoughtless Yes,” and this was soon followed by her clever composition, “Pushed by Unseen Hands.” Then came “Facts and Fictions of Life” and “Sex in Brain.” In 1894 came her latest, “An Unofficial Patriot,” and like all others it soon wended its way into public favor. Many of her books, essays and stories have been translated into both French and German, so that her name and fame have spread into intellectual Europe. Russia and Japan have adopted some of them and the brilliant mind of this frail woman has gone to instruct the people of other countries as well as our own.

Of all the American magazines that sought for her literary productions most, was the Arena, edited and published by B. O. Flower, of Boston. Of her work, Mr. Flower said: “I know of no living writer who can carry home a great truth to the heart of the humblest reader so tellingly as Helen Gardener does in her stories and novels.”

Helen Gardener lives in a glory all her own. She was not a creature of mere chance. The honors that fell upon her and belong to her she worked for, struggled for, and won. She was brilliant in wit and polished in diction. She was ever kind in her dealings with others, and always stood ready to lend a helping hand to the oppressed and distressed. Her pen, powerful in the extreme, was always and ever employed on the side of right, truth and human virtue. She assailed the shams of society with unfaltering logic. One purpose animated her life, her very being, and that was to rescue from and to uplift out of the trammels of superstition and vice, those of her own sex, and she was fearless in the defense of their rights and exposing the wrongs to which they were subjected by sanction of law.

Simple and unaffected, Helen H. Gardener lived the life she would have others live. In this she taught by example even stronger than by her written words. America has possessed but one such woman. Rich in oratory, her voice rung like the clarion notes of a bugle from the public rostrum, and as a writer she stands in a class by herself.

American Freethinkers have much to be thankful for in this brave, little woman, and in honoring her they do but honor themselves.

THE UNIVERSE vs. SPOOKS

AFFIRMATIVE ARGUMENT OF THE NON-EXISTENCE OF A GOD AND FUTURE LIFE. EXPOSITION OF PRINCIPLES OF MATERIALIST ASSOCIATION.

(By President Otto Wettstein, S. S. *)

Some seek the belief that best conforms to their vanity and ideas of comfort.

Materialists search for facts and truth; regardless of preferences and consequences. As Huxley said: "We are not here to enquire what we would prefer, but what is truth?"

The conflict between science and theism (including spiritism) is a contest between reality and mystery; between fact and fiction; between an immutable eternal order pervading nature, and caprice or miracle; between knowledge and inherited superstition; between everything and spooks.

Materialism is the science of all sciences—Monism, Ontology, Physics, Biology, Physiology, Chemistry, Astronomy, Psychology, Phrenology and others,—all must be classified under the head of Materialism. If we confine our belief strictly to what we KNOW, to facts, truth and to what we can rationally infer, then we are Materialists.

"Materialism" not only implies oneness—nature ONLY in distinction from nature AND God,—but also plainly defines what this unity consists of, viz: Matter. That is why "Monism" is obnoxious—it might imply all is God, all is spirit, all is mind, or other superstitions. "Materialism" defines itself,—"Monism" leaves the novice in doubt.

Materialism reduces the mysteries of nature and life to their minimum. Theism vastly augments the problem beyond hope of final solution. The mysteries of nature are great,—the mysteries of a God and spirits infinitely greater.

Materialism explains everything which has been, can and will be explained,—every phenomena, event, law, growth, activity, formation, process, etc., from tangible facts or, analogically, from what we KNOW; Theism explains nothing. The startling wonderful potencies of matter lately revealed to us by science, all confirm the truth that we must continue to seek in matter the sole causes of all cosmic activity and organic life.

The platform of Materialism is the Universe—the GREAT INFINITE ALL of existence. Theists monopolize the remainder—antediluvian tradition, infantile conceptions, absurd theories, miracles and spooks.

The infinite aggregate of cosmic phenomena necessitates infinite causes to produce them (the job is too big for a solitary agent or being, unless we admit of grotesque miracle and then argument ceases). These causes must exist in, or rather ARE THE MATTER which constitutes the phenomena. Science recognizes no extraneous forces, agents, artificers, gods or a "Great Dynamis" hovering around and manipulating matter by mind, volition or caprice. MATTER ALONE DOES IT. It produces, of its own inherent qualities, men and mice, constellations, and the delicate rose and forget-me-not.

The Materialist believes what every one knows or may know,—the Theist what nobody knows or can know.

When the Materialist explains the transition or evolution of inorganic matter to crudest organic forms—protoplasm—and this to cell or infusoria, he will have explained life. The well established facts of evolution explain the rest.

The Theist contrarily opens the bible and in Genesis ii:7 reads

*—Superstition Smasher.

and insists that we must believe that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." And then complacently insists that intelligent men and women, familiar with the grandeur and facts of astronomy and the complex and delicate organism of man, must believe the infantile conception that a few thousand years ago a God, in the image of man, yet the creator and ruler of countless gigantic incandescent bodies flying with inconceivable velocity through countless expanse, walking in a garden, in a few moments made a mature man out of dust—anatomy, flesh and blood, nervous and circulatory system, organs, brain, hair, teeth and all! I can only say with PUCK, "What fools these mortals be!"

Astronomy is radically materialistic. No honest man can be familiar with the facts of nature, revealed by astronomy, and remain a Theist or spiritist. We KNOW there is no God on our earth, over the earth, between us and the moon—8,000 miles (it would cause an eclipse!)—between us and the sun—92,000,000 miles, or between us and Sirius—58,000,000,000 of miles away. We KNOW these colossal fiery bodies, and countless millions others, all sweeping with inconceivable velocity within their orbits, make life of any kind absolutely impossible within inter-stellar space. This knowledge, these facts, corroborated by all the astronomers in the world, consigns all heavens, hells (is not existence without both vastly preferable to existence with both?) spirit-worlds and spheres—also Bro. Maddock's "Great Dynamis"—to oblivion.

Theists entirely ignore the well known facts of nature,—that life primarily necessitates conditions favorable to life. Such conditions do not exist within inter-stellar space. If an infinitely extensive God or a "Great Dynamis" were introduced among this vast infinite system of soaring, burning cosmic bodies, these spooks would be instantly torn to fragments or incinerated.

Spiritists likewise ignore the prominent fact of nature that all organic forms are transient,—begin and end—are born and die. Yet they believe that all the dead (though the constituents of their bodies are scattered and absorbed by other forms) are still alive, duplicate men and women without physical bodies, made of nothing, or what? Isn't it about time the S. P. R. would tell us what disembodied mortals are made of?

Physiologists and medical men KNOW that every bone, muscle, organ, artery and nerve is a necessity to the life of a perfect man. This physical structure IS the man; then how can we believe man can survive its destruction? We cannot even think of souls or spirits without first investing them with physical structure and material dry-goods.

Here spookists insist in reply that "Neither can we see electricity, yet are aware of its terrible potentiality." But there is no analogy between an inorganic force or fluid like electricity and organic spirit forms—the counterpart of man and woman. If not this—if transformed into gas, air or electricity—how can we again meet our beloved dead and hope to retain our own identity?

Souls or spirits must possess the form and functions of man, or—there are none! But such forms and functions necessitate organic structure—flesh, blood, bones, brain, etc. In the absence of the latter the former is unthinkable.

Agnostics say: "It is impossible to prove there is no God; you cannot traverse an infinite universe in search of him." I do not have to search for him,—HE HAS TO COME TO ME! If he does not come to me, this alone proves there is no such a

being, because the primal attribute of "Deity" must be omnipresence. If then, God is not where I am, where you are, or where science has penetrated with its giant telescopes, then this proves conclusively that "He" is nowhere. To believe that such a being is everywhere, in spite of "His" invisibility, and in spite of our knowledge that life is impossible among suns and planets, is to prostitute our intellect and to believe in an infinite spook.

On the highway of reason—in the evolution of religious thought—there is no stopping place between Romanism and scientific Materialism. The agnostic should not be an agnostic BECAUSE HE IS AN AGNOSTIC. He reasons, and pronounces the fundamental doctrines of Christianity unreasonable. He rejects the bible as authority and then has absolutely nothing to build a faith upon. Even the great but pious Gladstone conceded: "Unless you accept the testimony of the bible as conclusive, what evidence have you of God's existence and man's immortality?" But the bible stories our agnostic friend cannot accept. Then science beckons him to enter its glorious temple of facts and

truth. Here among the records of sages and thinkers he may revel in the ecstasies of acquiring knowledge and aiding personally in the grandest of all work—that of solving the great riddle of existence and life. If he persists in this noble work he will inevitably join the vanguard of modern thought—the Materialist Association—to substitute truth for error and to rid the world of superstition.

We affirm: There is no God and eternal life for the individual. There is absolutely no evidence to prove it. We deny as we do Mother Goose or the devil, because childish fable. We know there is no God as we know there is no elephant in our office or parlor, or that twice two is not five. There are innumerable God ideals, varied as humanity itself—from an "Overruling Providence," "Great Dynamis," or "Heavenly Father," etc., etc., to little "Billiken" you can buy for a nickel in the stores—but all alike are childish conceptions, phantoms, conjectures, idols and SPOOKS. (Sign the application blank of M. A. in another column and send to our Secretary.)

La Grange, Illinois.

ing for it; or failed to find themselves in unpleasant circumstances when they did not plan and work for the morrow.

Such doctrines as Jesus taught are pernicious and demoralizing, and any man who believes in prayer is afflicted with loss of self-reliance and will-power, for the moment one begins to lean on something or somebody in the struggle to exist, he weakens his forces and becomes timid and lacking in determination.

The man who does things relies on self, and cultivates by use and exercise that strength of will and purpose which can be realized in no other way. If a man wants to feel that he is the little end of nothing, let him sink into a state of passivity and begin praying; for there is no way more certain to insure weakness, vacillation, uncertainty and failure in life.

Prayer is the lazy man's attempt to get something for nothing, and every person that resorts to it for that purpose, or to secure anything beyond his reach, will find that he has been the victim of misplaced confidence.

Prayer may give relief to the mind the same as profanity does by relieving the pressure, but to use it for any other purpose is foolishness and folly.

Thanks for Papers!

ILLINOIS.—I send you by today's mail three copies of the Blade you asked for—March 15-22, and April 26. On receipt of this, if you have not yet received the missing numbers, write me, and I may be able to trace them. Enclosed find money order for \$1.50, renewal for W. L. Smith.—W. H. ALLEN.

Subscribes and Donates.

ILLINOIS.—Enclosed please find draft for \$4.00, to pay for my subscription, expiring March 15th, next. Balance you may use for the benefit of the Blade, or for a poor subscriber.—S. PABST.

The Foolishness of Prayer

Merely a Lazy Man's Effort to Get Something for Nothing.

(By Channing Severance.)

Prayer found its origin in superstition, and only those afflicted with it in some form, continue to believe in prayer and to pray.

No man who lives by the light of reason wastes any time in praying, for he knows that a universe run by unchangeable modes of motion, cannot be influenced by human wants or desires expressed in words, and then addressed to a phantom called God, that the imagination has created to account for dynamic forces.

The Christian Herald claims to be receiving many letters asking why prayers are seldom answered, which would indicate that intellectual forces are beginning to manifest themselves, although in the editor's reply such is not the case, for he seems to have softening of the brain or mental paralysis. His answer is weak, puerile and unsatisfactory. There is just one reason and only one why prayers are not answered:—there is nothing and nobody to answer them. Whether men pray to Jehovah or the new God Billiken, to a dead Jesus or an infinite spirit, the result is always the same—nothing doing. For 19 centuries the Christian has been praying, "O, Lord, give us this day our daily bread," but up to this date there has been none received from that source. On bended knee, with sanctimonious phiz and closed optics, he has appealed to the skies for help, relief and the good things of life; but from that direction nothing has come. Probably more agonizing prayers have

been uttered by drowning and ship-wrecked people than from any other cause; and yet no supernatural force has ever interfered to save life or bring relief. With piteous pleadings on their lips, they have always gone down to watery graves, where God alone had power to save. And his record on the land is the same as on the water; for in fire, flood and pestilence; in natural calamities of every kind, and in the presence of all the evils that afflict mankind, God has invariably failed to reveal himself or his power. Still people continue to believe and to pray, and these extravagantly absurd words attributed to Jesus, confront every reader of the Nek Testament: "And all things, whatsoever, ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

A greater falsehood was never uttered; and any man making such an assertion today would find a quick and ready welcome in the Annanias Club. Of all the absurdities ever taught and accepted by gullible man, the power to get anything you want or need by praying for it, leads the list.

If this were true, as Jesus affirms it to be, Christians would need to know nothing except how to pray; and by working their mouths they could get food, clothing, shelter and everything needed for comfort and pleasure. Knowledge, science and human efforts would be needless, and one could readily accept the fool's philosophy: "Take no thought for the morrow," for with everything needed guaranteed by prayer, why should one be disturbed by fears of want? How many people we see even now, who declare they believe every word in the Bible, and yet not one of them ever got anything from supernatural forces by pray-

In a Spirit of Sarcasm

**Pointed Questions Are Asked and Answers
Are Given by the Same Writer
in the Same Article.**

(By W. J. McSweeney.)

Having read your paper which was handed by one of your ungodly followers, I have come to the conclusion that while it is possible to find such blasphemous matter spread broadcast over our land, an angry god will send earthquakes, panics, famines and failures on our heads until we are crushed from the face of the earth.

For instance: San Francisco for years has been cursed more than any other city in the land, with Materialists, Atheists, Freethinkers, Modernists and Socialists, and in their fancied security they clapped each other on the back while an angry and outraged god sent an earthquake, which swallowed them down before they had time to repent or say their prayers.

Yes, said the ungodly Materialists, but why did god destroy the churches, priests and ministers as well as all other religious institutions in the city, and spare the Chinese quarters, as well as allow most every Atheist, Materialist and Socialist in the city to escape? But the answer is easy: A spirit of commercialism, graftism, and boodleism had taken hold of the religious people of that city to such an extent that they passed up the saving and salvation of heathen souls. They even refused to furnish funds which would make it possible for the Holy Fathers who are God's chosen on earth, to reach those benighted outcasts. So that God punished the Christians for being stingy and close-fisted, and gave the Chinamen and other undesirable vagabonds a longer lease of life in hope that they would see the error of their ways and repent. We had a lesson from Italy a few days ago. For years we have been told that it was the most God-forsaken country of the earth; that when a Cardinal ventured on the streets of Rome a company of Italian soldiers were compelled to guard him from an ungodly mob. The Holy Father himself, who is Christ's appointed agent on earth, is locked up in a dungeon like any plain drunk or common vagabond. I will quote William E. Curtis, writing to the Chicago Record-Herald from that country about two years ago. He said that the country was teeming over with atheists, socialists and anarchists; he said that the payment of Peter's pence was stopped in that country entirely. He said that the Holy Father and pious monks were compelled to do anything and everything to

raise sufficient money to spread the Gospel of Christ. He said that two heads of St. Peter were on exhibition in the city of Rome; that it cost twenty-five cents to see one and thirty-two cents in our money to see the other. Rival bands of monks have been carrying on these exhibitions since the eleventh century.

During all that time the monks in charge of each head have denounced each other in the bitterest language, each claiming their head was genuine and branding the other as a fraud, and those in charge as fakirs. He said that in the fifteenth century the leading Catholics of the world appealed to the Pope. They said it was his duty to examine the heads and decide which was genuine. They said it was a disgrace to Christianity that the church itself should have two heads of St. Peter on exhibition in the city of Rome. For a long time the Pope hesitated to interfere, as the monks in charge of each head were a power in the church; so much so that each faction had its defenders in the College of Cardinals, so that no matter how he decided there was danger of a split in the church of God. But he finally decided to visit both temples and determine which was the real head of St. Peter. On the day appointed the citizens of Rome celebrated as never before; the buildings were all decorated; the army marched, and pilgrims came from all parts of the globe. The Pope entered the temples amidst the greatest of pomp and ceremony; he looked at the heads and declared he would make his decision public next day, which he did. The historian says that he was the only Pope who was a natural-born humorist; he decided that both heads were genuine,—one being the head of Peter when a boy and the other when a man. So that each faction is still showing the head and doing business in the same old way.

Curtis says that for a thousand years small bags of earth have been sold from the grave of St. Peter to the pilgrims who visited Rome. He said that the earth never lasted more than a day, and that two men were hired to haul earth at night and fix up the grave for business the next morning. The Vatican itself is conducting the sale of the earth from the grave of St. Peter. Curtis in describing how the "God forsaken and Christ deserted" Italians have fallen away from the church, said that he reached the city of Rome on a Saturday night for the especial purpose of attending High Mass at St. Peter's on Sunday. He left word with the hotel clerk to be called in time for High Mass, as well as an order

for a special attendant who could speak Italian and English, to accompany him; they got to the church, which is the largest in the world, having a seating capacity of 20,000, on time. Several priests were on the altar and a great many candles were lighted. Curtis said to his attendant that he wanted to attend High Mass, and was informed that this was the real thing. He asked where the congregation were, and was told that the seven men in that vast church were the congregation at High Mass in St. Peter's. He said that he interviewed the seven men after the service was over and found that six of them were tourists or sight-seers like himself; which shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that the poor benighted Italian is doomed beyond all hope of resurrection.

Now, sir, with the horrible lessons of San Francisco and Italy before your eyes and the additional deplorable fact that the people are none too good in Kentucky and that earthquake rumblings are of daily occurrence, and that we are being warned by an angry God and his chosen agents, day after day, is it not time for you and your ungodly followers to take count of stock, so to speak, and see "where you are at?" Do you wonder that an angry God opened the earth and buried the people of Italy when he saw the Holy Fathers, who are his chosen men on this planet, compelled to sell bags of dirt for a living? Why not state through the columns of your paper why no earthquake shock ever disturbed the Vatican or the city of Rome?

By the way, Mr. Editor, I see that you have been lecturing in different parts of the country, and I ask as a special favor that I be notified in case you speak at Peoria, Ill., as I want to go down to Pekin where the people have the fear of God in their hearts. Not wishing to take any chances of being swallowed down in this city, I will remain in Pekin until you have gone.

Peoria, Illinois.

A New Found Friend.

OMAHA.—A copy of your excellent paper has lately come to my notice, and I shall take delight in handing out sample copies to my Socialist friends, and in soliciting subscriptions from them. Enclosed find 10c in stamps. Hope the paper will reach me before Feb. 5th, in time for a literature social.—MARY PIERCE ROE.

Renews and Helps—Some.

ARKANSAS.—Enclosed find check for \$5.00. Set my tab up one year. Send Walter Hurt's "Scarlet Shadow." Apply \$1.50 to J. C. Freeman subscription, and 50 cents old back subscription. Good luck and long life to the Blade.—M. R. COFFMAN.



MAN'S ORIGIN AND DESTINY

ADMIRATION FOR THE MARTYR TO LIBERTY.—PITY FOR THE FANATIC WHO DIES FOR IMAGINARY CAUSES.

—REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES AS SHOWN BY HISTORY AND FACT.

(By Dr. A. Hausman.)

We don't see any other standard in history by which to measure the value of a nation, than the physical power, which however depends always on the peaceable development within a nation, equivalent to numerical increase and utilization of the natural forces. The invention of powder for instance, gave the European nations at once the supremacy over all other races. The highest state of civilization before the present era we find with the Greeks and after their downfall the Romans stand at the head of the world for some time. From the ruins of this mighty empire rose the gloomy, barbarous era of christianity, which ruthlessly destroyed most of what was left of the heathenish civilization. For fifteen hundred years the church ruled supreme and during this long time history is a record of idiocy and superstition. The great deeds are great crimes and follies, the monuments of christian humanity are the stake, the scaffold and the chamber of torture. Then began the age of reformation, characterized by the emancipation of part of the nations from the central power of the church at Rome, embodied in the person of the pope. Although superstition and fanaticism still remained, greater freedom was accorded individual opinion and scientific research which finally brought on a great change of ideas in regard to man's relation to nature, inaugurating the present era, by whatever name it may be known to posterity.

As stated above, the deleterious effect of the false christian doctrines lies in rendering the people moral cowards and submissive slaves to those, who like the fetich man, take advantage of their faults for their own material benefit. It was the church and the ruling powers who profited by the helpless moral condition to which the belief in supernatural powers reduced the faithful subjects. Egoism was at the bottom in both cases, but while it assumed an irrational form among the ignorant, who surrendered the fruit of their labor, or even their life, from fear of hell, it was perfectly rational with the members of the church and the rulers on the throne, because they received real for imaginary value. But whatever may be our feeling in regard to the poor deluded slaves, we cannot help admitting that their oppressors were the abler of the two and the fittest to survive.

We hear of martyrs in the early days of Christianity and their heroic death is quoted as proof of the truth of the cause for which they died. If self-sacrifice for a conviction was a proof of its truth, the Buddhism of the Indians must be the truest of all religions, for these fanatics have cast themselves in great numbers before the carriage of the Juggernaut, to be crushed beneath its wheels. It

is the dubious privilege of the divine man to sacrifice himself for an imbecility, of which the animal is incapable,—“More beastly than the beast,” says Goethe. Whatever may be true of these stories of martyrdom, fanaticism that leads to self-destruction or mutilation, is always a sign of a low intellectual standard, and is met with only among savages and the lowest classes of civilized nations; for instance, the Flagellantes in New Mexico. We can justly respect and admire a man who dies fighting for his country, family or liberty, but we can only pity the fanatic who dies for an imaginary cause.

That the mere change of form in the worship of the unknown powers, the only difference between heathendom and Christendom, did not effect a radical change in the moral faculties of the people, is demonstrated by the behavior of the Christians after they had attained the supremacy, about the fourth century. The innate barbarity and cruelty of that age was not eradicated and supplanted by nobler emotion with the adoption of the Christian rites, and the actions of the first Christians do not divulge any improvement in this respect. They destroyed with a rude hand the splendid monuments of art and the records of science, and baptized the heathen with fire and sword. They have no reason to be proud of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, who was a monster compared with his apostate successor. Instead of proving by their deeds that there was any truth in the doctrine of love, they quarreled continually among themselves and fought over the absurd dogmas. It is quite edifying to read the history of the Popes, “the vicars of Christ” on earth. Among those who ruled during the first twelve hundred years were many who committed all crimes imaginable,—murder, mutilation, incest, etc., so that it would be difficult to find a criminal now-a-days so thoroughly debased and bestialized as one of these highest dignitaries of the church. That they were not of a milder disposition at a later period, is shown by the horrors of the Inquisition, which, if not introduced by one of the Popes, was approved and assisted by them. Only since the Reformation they have become more humane, from the good reason that the people don't submit any longer to the charitable treatment of the church by fire and sword. A little harmless cursing is all that his holiness can indulge in today, and the only effect it has upon the intelligent people, is to elicit a smile of contempt.

Two institutions are principally characteristic of the spirit of love and humanity prevailing in the Christian church,—the Inquisition and the persecution of witches. Imagine the scene of an “Auto-da-fe”, only three hundred years ago. In an open space are placed a number of posts

surrounded by piles of wood and fagots, and on the sides are erected tribunes for the spectators at the exhibition of Christian love. Under the ringing of bells the sad procession approaches the fatal spot; the condemned dressed in coarse garments, with paper caps on their heads, mockingly decorated with devils in glaring colors. Leading the procession march the disciples of Christ, the pious monks, bearing the emblem of the church, the cross, and chanting hymns to the glory of god. Arrived on the spot, the victims are seized by the executioners, men, women and children tied to the stakes and the torches applied. How eagerly the Christian spectators strain their necks to feast their eyes upon the writhing and squirming victims in their terrible agony! How their ears enjoy the music of their frenzied shrieks of pain, dying off in the low moan of the death struggle, the welcome relief for the sufferer. They were all good Christians, the spectators, the executioners and the clergy,—what was it that made their eyes blind against the intense sufferings of their fellow-men; their ears deaf against the cries of despair, and stifled the least emotion of sympathy in their breasts? It was the Christian religion, the cursed lie of an almighty god, with whose consent this fiendish work was done. What prompted the old woman to carry a bundle of fagots to the stake on which Huss was burned? Her faith in a powerful god, without whose consent no hair could fall from the head, much less one of his children be burned to death. Those who thoughtlessly repeat the stale, stupid lie of the humanizing tendency of Christendom, ought to be able to point out in what it consists, how and where it shows itself. Was Christianity dead for eighteen hundred years, or if not, where must we look for the Christian if there were none among the clergy, the government or the people? The fact is, that these horrors were the natural outcome of the false teachings of Christianity; they indicate the culmination of Christendom, which, after fifteen hundred years of development, has reached the acme of its power, and from now begins to crumble under the blows of the Reformation.

Supposing some fanatics would attempt an "Auto-da-fe" today, what would be the result? People of all creeds, Infidels, Protestants, Jews and Catholics would join to prevent it. Even the Catholics? Yes, though their religion is still the same as at the time of the Inquisition, they are not the same people; they could not help yielding to the progressive spirit of the times, in spite of their religion. Still the fire of fanaticism is smouldering under the ashes, and there are zealous Catholics among the ignorant peasants in European countries who would not object to roasting a heretic alive, and what might be expected from the higher clergy we must infer from their own words. In the American Review of October, 1888, we find a reply of Robert G. Ingersoll to Cardinal Manning, in a controversy over the Catholic religion, especially to a statement made by the Cardinal that "the greatest statesmen and rulers the world has ever seen are the Popes of Rome." Ingersoll gives a brief summary of the reign of the Popes until the

year 1045, which is characterized by every crime and shocking immorality imaginable. Since the persecution of heretics, Jews and witches reached its culmination only shortly before the Reformation, we see that the Popes had not improved in the meantime. If the Cardinal considers the vilest of criminals as his models of rulers, the world has reason to rejoice that the time has passed forever when the church had power to carry out its alleged mission on earth.

The persecution of witches belongs under the same category as the Inquisition. Fear of the unknown powers forms the mental impulse of all these atrocities, and the Christian nations stood in this respect exactly upon the same level with the lowest African tribes of to-day. These latter kill the person pointed out by the fetish-man (of course, his enemies) as witches; they sacrifice others to propitiate the offended evil spirits; they tie their daughters to trees to be eaten alive by the vultures, in order to procure rain. The Christians did the same only three hundred years ago. They tortured young girls still in their teens, and venerable matrons bent with age, and burnt them on the stake when something natural happened, an epidemic broke out, or some other calamity befell the place, which was attributed to the evil influences of the witches. And it were not the Catholics alone that perpetrated these outrages; the Protestants did not stand behind in relentless persecution of innocent people.

The details of these witch trials are revolting and disgusting in the extreme. Just think of a young girl in the bloom of youth, stripped naked before a court of Christian judges, strapped on the rack, the ropes cutting deep into the flesh, the joints being torn out of their sockets. Outside a multitude of Christians listens to the piercing shrieks of agony, but they evoke no echo of compassion in their breasts. Religion, the belief in an almighty god who was responsible for all that happened, made them deaf against the cries of despair and smothered the least stir of humane feeling. What would the people do today if they knew a witch was being tried in the court house? Would they stand idle and listen indifferently to the heart-rending appeals for help, trusting in the almighty god, without whose will his child could not be hurt? No, they would consider it their duty to interfere, and this sense of duty would be so powerful that nothing but superior force could prevent them from rescuing the prisoner, and, perhaps, lynching the court. Why this difference between then and now? Because the people have less faith in god and more in themselves.

We see that the civilized nations have made some progress in regard to the treatment of heretics and witches, simply because the fanatics that would still like to destroy them, are in the minority. But we have some other institutions, a legacy from our ancestors, the animals, which can not be abolished all at once, but will be greatly modified as soon as sufficient numbers have advanced far enough

(Continued on Page 12.)

BLUE GRASS BLADE

BLUE GRASS BLADE.

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ETERNAL LIFE.

Who is there who can possibly hope for, expect or desire eternal life?

The very thought of eternal life is fearful to contemplate. No end. No rest. Nothing but eternal life and motion. Argued to its logical end it is more fearful than eternal sleep,—annihilation. There is something peaceful, restful in sleep. Eternal sleep must mean eternal peace. Eternal life must mean eternal conflict, for all life, in any form, is a conflict, a struggle.

It may be true that the ignorant desire for immortality gave rise to the belief in such a doctrine, but belief, or desire, proves nothing. If there be no god, if there be no life beyond the grave, all the expressed beliefs of all the ages, will not put gods on High Olympus, nor discover a new bourne for the weary travelers of earth. If god does not exist and if there be a land of perennial bliss, then all the unbelief in the universe could not change that fact, and they would still be, did the whole universe deny them.

The dream of Christian immortality is not an original conception. Nor did it come to them from the Jews, altogether, though the Jews furnished them with the material out of which their system of faith was built. Prior to the Babylonian captivity, the Jews did not believe in a future state of existence. To them the grave was the

be-all and the end-all. The grave was the actual and the positive close. Just as the negro race, brought to America in slavery, mere barbaric savages without the means of intelligent communication, and by association with the white race acquired and assimilated the art of intelligent speech, traits of civilization, and learned some of the facts of society and the social contract, so did the Jews, by association with the Babylonians, a people of superior intellect, acquire and assimilate new religious conceptions, and we now find them beginning to evince a belief in some sort of a future life. We have but to turn to some of the pessimistic passages of the old testament to be convinced of these facts. History reveals the great influence of a stronger race upon a weaker people. The weaker intellect must fall before the presence of the stronger. And so the Jews, but mere barbarians, imitating their captors, ultimately came to believe in and began to teach the doctrine of a future life.

From this very fact, the fact of a non-belief in a future life, by the Jews, individually and as a race, one of the most favorite arguments of orthodox advocates is shattered, namely, that all races and nations of men have believed in a future life of some character. Here were the Jews with absolutely no such belief, and this fact will have to be explained by the orthodox professors before reiterating the argument.

Once a future life became an element of orthodox worship, it would appear that every other religious system, or the leaders thereof, entered into some sort of an agreement thereon, with slight variations. The Buddhist believes in Nirvana, the acme of perfection, and constant re-incarnation to a higher or lower state according to the account of good or bad deeds performed. The Buddhist has no hell. In this he is immensely superior to the Christian. None but a Christian deity could create a lake of burning fire and brimstone in which to torment the creatures whom he had made. The Mohammedan believes in a paradise, wherein, if he acquire it, he is surrounded forever with black-eyed houris, a perfect *dolce far niente* through all eternity. The Christian invented both a heaven and a hell. Bliss in one and blisters in the other. Its heaven is a place of barbaric fancy. Its hell a disgrace to those who preach it. According to this idea, the moment man hits the globe he starts on a trot for the grave, at the end of which heaven or hell awaits him, and for more than forty years I have been striving to determine which of these two evils we should seek to avoid. Col. Ingersoll once said that while heaven may have the best climate, hell enjoyed the best and most intellectual society, and as a man's character is usually judged by the company he keeps I would prefer hell, if preference be given me.

There is a good story told of an incident said to have occurred during the civil war. From out the mad hell of that fight a wounded hero was brought. His life hung by a narrow, slender thread. He was carried to the hospital and placed in the care of a nurse, one of those

noble women who risk their lives ministering unto others. As the soldier lay dying, a preacher entered the ward, and immediately began talking to him about salvation, crucified saviors, repentance, sin, heaven and hell. His doctrine of dire calamity so influenced the mind of the dying soldier that he at once began to moan and weep in bitter anguish, crying that he was lost and damned for hell. The nurse took in the situation. She is said to have been a muscular sort of a woman. Approaching the preacher, she said, "Look here, Mr. Goody-two-shoes, get out of my ward, and if I ever catch you in it again I will throw you through the window." The story goes on to say that the preacher hit the pike and went down the dusty trail at a gait that would make Lou Dillon ashamed of her record. The nurse then went back to the bedside of her patient, and in vain tried to console him and dispel his fears. Finding her efforts in that direction to be of no avail, she then said:

"You came to me a man. You shall not leave me a coward. If you must go to hell, go like a man."

If Romans, nursed by a she-wolf, became demi-gods, think what our American citizenship would be if sprung from the loins of such a woman.

SOME CHURCH STATISTICS.

The total church membership in the United States as furnished by Dr. Carroll, of New York, do not show much for the actual growth of the church, but would suggest that as the population increases the church is rapidly falling behind. Even this much is admitted by the compiler of the statistics. A decided decrease is shown as against the figures given for 1907 and in 1908. The figures for each denomination, omitting the so-called Christian Scientists and the Spiritualists, are as follows:

Catholic	12,394,731
Methodist	6,838,779
Baptist	5,413,945
Lutheran	2,082,766
Presbyterian	1,831,854
Disciples of Christ	1,295,423
Episcopal	893,972
Reformed	432,248
Latter-Day Saints	399,500
United Brethren	300,269
Evangelical	177,416
Jewish	143,000
Dunkard Brethren	122,332
Friends	119,176

Total

32,445,411

These figures would show, at least, that the church is at a standstill in point of membership. The indication, then, is that it has reached its zenith, and beyond a few spasmodic spurts there will follow a general decline in the next few years.

This is worth striving for, working for, toiling for.

Remember the total population is now about 84,000,000.

AN ECHO OF THE DEBATE.

From reports received by the Blade, both public and private, it is made to appear that there is considerable of an aftermath connected with both the debates in which I indulged during my last trip through Ohio.

It will be recalled that the first of these was with Leander S. Keyser, pastor of the English Lutheran church, at Canal Dover, and that I met him on his own ground; and the other was with Rev. —— McVey, a Campbellite preacher, with no church, whom I met at McConnellsburg, also on his own ground.

Our readers will probably recall the fact that in my first letter about the Canal Dover debate, which was written at Marietta, and in a hurry, I made a casual reference to a matter which I promised to discuss in a later letter. Subsequent events, of which information was sent to me, had caused me to say no more about it, but later developments now demand that I should discuss it, not for myself alone, but for my friends.

Upon the opening night of the Canal Dover debate, Rev. —— Kennedy, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church, at Canal Dover, was the presiding moderator, and he was present in the interest of Mr. Keyser. It became his duty to make the opening statement. He did so, and announced the subject under discussion, the terms and conditions of the contest. During his preliminary remarks he referred to the fact that an admission fee was being charged for the debate, and while I may not remember his precise words or language used, it was, in substance, as follows:

"There has been some criticism about the charge being made for an admission fee, but I wish to say that the Committee alone are responsible for it, and the speakers had absolutely nothing to do with it. The Committees had to secure this opera house, stand responsible for the renting, assume the cost of advertising, and the other incidental expenses, and without regard for the speakers the committees decided upon making the charge. I say this in justice to the speakers."

Following this Dr. Keyser was introduced, and in his prefatory remarks, he not only confirmed what Mr. Kennedy had said about the committee and the admission fee, but reiterated it with considerable force and vehemence. At the time both gentlemen made these statements, I knew they were untrue. My mind pondered upon the subject for a few moments, but I finally resolved to make no further mention thereof for the reason that I had agreed with Mr. Keyser that there should be no personal allusions made by each toward the other, and I feared that any criticism I might offer connected with the statement might be construed into a personal attack upon Mr. Keyser; therefore, I declined to say one word on the subject. Here the matter ended, temporarily.

On the second night, probably forgetting what he had said on the first night, Mr. Keyser deliberately charged

me, personally, and my committee, with being solely responsible for the admission fee being charged, and stated to the audience that he and his committee wished to make the admission free. His followers applauded him vociferously for this statement.

My turn came, however, when I directed the attention of the audience, or so many thereof who were present the first night, to what both Mr. Keyser and Mr. Kennedy had said, to the effect that "the speakers had absolutely nothing to do with it" and that the "committees were alone responsible for the admission charges" and an immediate change came over that vast assembly. I further called attention to the fact that Mr. Keyser had written me a letter in which he had agreed with me that an admission fee should be charged, and the profits, if any, divided equally between us, adding that he "could use a little extra money", and wherein he further suggested that my travelling and hotel expenses should be allowed me before a final division of the proceeds was made. This was before the committees had met, and before Dr. Keyser had actually appointed the committee to represent him. Mr. Keyser, holding up his hand as if to invoke his god as a witness, declared to that audience that he had not written such a letter to me. I did not know whether I had preserved the letter or not. I promised, however, that if, upon my return home, I could find that letter I would send it to Canal Dover, and my friends could see that it was published.

In a few days after I had left a report had reached me that Mr. Keyser had sought to prevent the publication of the letter, if I succeeded in finding it. This was before I had reached home. I then resolved that it should not be published if it was calculated to work any injury upon Mr. Keyser, for while my own friends were satisfied with the truth of my position, the followers of Mr. Keyser need know aught to the contrary, and I had no desire to cause any suffering to him, his wife and children.

Arriving home, I searched through the letters and papers in my desk, with the result that I found the letter in question, and I immediately mailed it to Mr. Walter C. Hardesty, placing it in his hands, telling him my views thereon, and leaving the matter of its publication to himself and my friends in Canal Dover. Newspaper clippings sent to the Blade office show that the letter was published, and that Keyser's friends have also written and published comments thereon, favorable to him, which Mr. Hardesty has answered in my behalf.

In justice to Mr. Keyser, it must be said that while the letter thus published did contain a statement that he "could use a little extra money," which he so vehemently denied having written, it further stated that he was willing to do his part in the debate without any remuneration; but would leave that matter to the committee. The fact is, that Mr. Toomey, without any consultation with me, had agreed with Mr. Keyser that an admission should be charged, and at the time of this agreement my committee, which was appointed first, had not even been named. My

correspondence with Mr. Keyser followed, in which we agreed upon it, and then the committee took it up.

The friends of Mr. Keyser overlook one important fact, in their criticisms, namely, that both Mr. Keyser and Mr. Kennedy had declared that the speakers had "absolutely nothing to do with it," and that the committees alone were responsible. The publication of the letter ought to be sufficient to disprove such a statement. For my part, I KNOW that the speakers, Mr. Keyser and myself, the principals, did agree upon the admission fee being charged, and that the committees, who were simply agents, had nothing to do but to ratify the agreement their principals had made.

Under ordinary circumstances, such a matter might appear of too trifling a character to demand such attention, but as it is a matter of such interest in Canal Dover, and as my personal honor and the integrity of my friends are at stake in this controversy, I deemed it advisable to restate these facts through the Blade columns.

In any event, it is clear that neither of the preachers named told the truth on the first night of the debate. The purpose of their statements was, evidently, to shield Mr. Keyser, but that they had to include me therein. Just why the matter should have been injected into the debate does not present itself, unless it was an effort to save Mr. Keyser from criticism by his church membership. That both went too far must now be conceded and this is a vindication of my position. The publication of the letter, and the known events of the debate show the following:

1. That both Mr. Keyser and Mr. Kennedy misstated the facts on the first night of the debate.
2. That Mr. Keyser did write a letter saying that he could use a "little extra money."
3. That the speakers did arrange for the admission fee and that the committees were not responsible.

MORAL TRAINING.

Plant virtue early and give it the best possible cultivation.

Better and more attractive gardens would result if mankind could only be induced to give the flower the same, or an equal chance they suffer to the weed.

As a general rule, it must be admitted, that the minds of the majority of men are but congeries of maxims, notions, opinions, rules and theories they have managed to pick up at various times and in different places. Few of these are sound, the bulk of them unsound. Sometimes they are not consistent with each other, but for the lack of better means, these form the mental standards by which all things are tried. As it is easier to build on vacant ground than on a site already occupied by ruins, so the priest and preacher conspire to subject the young and innocent mind to the inculcation of false moral concepts, by furnishing false incentives and placing morality upon an unsafe foundation.

In a foot-note to his poem on Italy, John Rogers wrote, "To judge at once of a nation, we have only to throw our eyes on the markets and the fields." The inference is, that if the markets are well supplied and the fields well cultivated, all is well. And the converse must be equally true. Were the markets and fields otherwise, we would be apt to infer that the people were either barbarians or under some sort of oppression. So it is with the individual. The mind, which is but the combined mentality, may be regarded as the field upon which the highest virtue may be cultivated, and the brain, which is the organ of thought, may be considered the market to which the mind brings its best products. As the nation may be judged in the manner indicated, so may the individual. The very thoughts expressed are an index to the extent of cultivation given to the mind, and from them we are able to determine the quality of the thought-seeds planted therein. If we would have the tree fling its branches wide and free, its roots must be fixed deep and firm. So it is with the flower of human virtue. Plant it firmly in the mind while it is yet young. Water it from the fountain of truth. Do not intentionally deceive a child. One deception will breed another. For the mind to reason to certain truths it must have in it the principles of truth. For the mind to lean ever towards purity and virtue it must have a virtuous foundation to begin work on.

If there is any system of instruction calculated to injure the infantile mind, to warp it into unnaturalness, it is that coming from theology. All such instruction is like the twilight, which, holding the day in one hand and the night in the other, mocks the senses with distorted appearances, which a thicker darkness would hide, and a broader daylight dispel. Virtue is presented in a wondrous garb. It is not taught along with firm, personal resolve. Prone-ness to sin and a blood atonement are the principal elements given. Is it any wonder that virtue has failed to find a home near cloistered walls. Uproot the dogma! The very fabric of our social being is held together only by virtuous law. Those who violate it are moral bankrupts, and mental bankruptcy flourishes most on so-called consecrated ground.

As the tree is inclined, in that direction in which the twig is bent, so the earliest training of the mind shapes its destiny. Then be sure to plant virtue early and cultivate it thoroughly

Between a number of advisers, we believe we have a fairly good solution of the Correspondence School problem, which we will discuss later.

If the preachers were really sincere in their pretended efforts to eradicate sin and crime, they would welcome the Blade as an ally; as it is, they condemn and thereby expose their faults.

Chief Justice Ricks, of the Illinois Supreme Court, in a

recent decision in an insurance case, reviewed the extent to which insurance protection was being carried on today, and remarked that indemnities were guaranteed against loss through "acts of god." Judicially speaking, Justice Ricks is correct, but it is mighty bad theology. Imagine man insuring his fellow-man against loss caused by the act of deity. Why should a wise and beneficent deity cause mortal man to suffer loss? Cyclones, earthquakes, tornados, lightning are denominated acts of god in insurance circles.

The man who spends his money doing good while he is alive gets a great deal more satisfaction out of it than the man who leaves his wealth to a doubtful posterity.

The man who has lived so that he does not fear death has more than half solved the problem of life.

When a man or woman is willing to tell the exact truth to the tax assessor they stand a fair show of getting on the right side of St. Peter.

For some preachers to proclaim that they know their own minds would indicate that they have very little to boast about.

Will the Blade readers and friends of Freethought in both Indiana and Illinois who can arrange for lectures communicate with the Blade office? The Editor is contemplating taking that trip some time in April or May. We have Muncie and Covington, Ind., and Peoria, Ill., already on the list.

Orthodoxy detests nothing so much as criticism of itself.

It is impossible to direct humanity to right conduct through fear.

The Christian leopard has been considerably tamed, but its spots remain unchanged. It is the same old animal.

The fiercer the competition between the Salvation through-lines, the higher goes the cost of the fare.

Profiting by the lessons of experience, we have made ample provisions for a prospective bound volume of the Blade for 1999.

According to a recent ruling of the Interstate Commerce Commission, preachers are yet to be accounted as members of the privileged class, in that the law prohibiting the furnishing of free transportation by railroad companies, is held not to be applicable to them. In other words, preachers can still enjoy immunity and travel free or for children's fare. What is the use of being a parson unless you can get a rake-off?

Man's Origin and Destiny

(Continued from Page 7.)

in reason to understand their true causes. These are the standing armies and the hereditary monarchies. Originally the result of personal merits, the dignity and power of a ruler became hereditary and entirely independent of the personal qualifications of the successor. In consequence of this arrangement the wars, instead of being merely defensive, assumed the character of personal affairs, and thousands of fools sacrifice their life cheerfully under the delusion that wars are sent by god: they are Christians. But this subject we must reserve for the future, and return for the present to history, to investigate by what agencies mankind was extricated from a condition more "beastly than the beast," which found its actual expression in the cultivation of religious rites, cruel refined murder and wholesale slaughter. We found that Christendom simply meant a relapse into a state of barbarism after the destruction of ancient civilization, from which at last sprung a new era of culture, which is just being ushered into the world. As the first sign of progress, we encounter the Reformation, the culminating point of a movement against the church that had been going on for a long time, but had not sufficient strength to assert its claim. Heretofore, every attempt to cast off the iron yoke of the church had been promptly squelched by the customary methods of fire and sword, but now the dissenters had grown numerically strong enough to maintain their independence against the church of Rome, after long and bloody wars. However, reformation alone would never have led the people to freedom and intelligence, but by breaking the obnoxious power of the church, it opened the road to free thought and scientific research. . . .

Science was not quite dead. A spark of truth was still glimmering under the ruins of the heathenish temples, carefully guarded by the church, and quenched whenever it threatened to burst into a flame. At last, the spirit of time fanned it into a bright blaze, which could not be extinguished any longer, and is now rapidly consuming the rotten, tottering structure of the church. There are many religions, and they are always changing, but there is only one truth and one science and it never changes. The facts remain the same; our knowledge of their relations may change. But any truth, mathematically established, can never change. The Pythagorean theorem, discovered about 500 years B. C., is as true today as on the date of its discovery.

From the fifteenth century dates the beginning of our modern sciences, the invention of the printers art being the first important step of incalculable value for the dissemination of new ideas. Honest men commenced scanning the heavens in search of truth, and discovered the true relations of the planets and the sun, destroying the false, conceited idea of the central position of the earth. To

Copernicus the world is indebted for laying the foundation of the most sublime of all sciences, astronomy, perfected and augmented through the labors of Tycho de Brahe, Galileo and Kepler. The knowledge of our earth's surface was increased by the voyages of bold travellers, such as Columbus, Vasco de Gama, Magellan, et al., who crossed the unknown oceans and discovered and explored new continents. Under many difficulties, arose the science of anatomy, at first confined to the coarser structures; but after the invention of the microscope in the seventeenth century, lead to the discovery of the true element of the human body, the cell. The discovery of the primitive elements, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, etc., gave origin to a new science, chemistry, which soon threw a new light on the composition and real character of the bodies. Physics, botany, mineralogy, geology, zoology and other natural sciences sprung up after the dark night of superstition and lie in which the church had shrouded the human intellect, had been dispelled by the Reformation. A gradual change of ideas took place as a natural sequence of the better understanding of the natural forces. Astronomy taught the true cause of the eclipses, which ceased to be feared as the work of the devil or a token of the wrath of the dreaded god. The appearance of a comet with its fiery tail did no longer spread dismay and consternation as a herald of war and pestilence. No longer were innocent persons persecuted for disasters caused by the elements, and honest men for telling the truth. In proportion as the knowledge of nature increased, was the Christian fetish more and more deprived of his power, until his image has vanished in the inconceivable infinity of space. Astronomy discovered fixed laws regulating the movements of the planets, instead the caprices of a human god. Physics, chemistry, etc., showed the same laws of the universe as the cause of all the natural phenomena on earth. At last, there remained a problem which apparently could not be solved without presuming the action of a supernatural power, the origin of man; nor is it surprising that science was unable to lift the veil of mystery which hung over the cradle of mankind, until at a recent date. We learned to define man as a culmination of a physical process, continuing on the surface of the earth since millions of years, called life, the result of the physical forces in operation on the surface of the earth. His complicated relations could not be understood without collecting a correspondingly large number of facts, as represented in the auxiliary branches of science, which are all based upon the same common laws we know, and undoubtedly others we do not know. We required geology to understand the series of successive types on a progressive scale; we needed chemistry to demonstrate that man is made of the same stuff as the earth and the rest of the animals. The anatomy of both had to be far advanced before the relative value of

the physiological organs could be determined by comparison. Without the improved modern microscope it would have been impossible to detect the minute cell, the fundamental element of organic life, and prove the common origin of all animals from this small body. And lastly, we cannot join all these factors into a harmonious structure without the biological laws, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to the ingenious and truthful observations of Charles Darwin.

We have recognized as the basis of society "egoism," or the instinct of self-preservation, and as the only law in nature physical force, which presumption we find fully confirmed in the manner in which the transformation of ideas and actions resulting from the altered mental impulse,

which we call progress, was effected. Every social institution must be of benefit for some persons, or it would not exist. We saw how the fetich-man took advantage of the stupidity of his fellow savages for his material interest. Later on the church followed his example, and there is no doubt that avarice and cupidity played an important part during the persecutions of heretics and witches, disguised under religious zeal. It is the same with the institution of hereditary monarchy. The material interest of many persons depends on it, and they are striving to maintain it from purely egotistical motives. How the church fought for the material emoluments derived from its privileges, is testified by bloody wars, recorded in history.

(To be continued.)

The Blade's Correspondence

Willing to Do His Part.

VIRGINIA.—You are having troubles of your own, so I am not going to bother you with mine. I am hard up. Sorry I can't send the \$3 to set me up to October, 1909 in this letter. I will send you at least \$1.50 and all if I possibly can the latter part of March.—C. A. FAUSNET.

A Very Welcome Letter.

KANSAS.—Enclosed you will find two dollars (money order), for which you will please send to me the Bound Volume of the Blue Grass Blade. Ship when convenient to you.

The new commandments are all right. Wish there were more to follow them. The little girl Anna Hoglin, bless her life! she has a mind to be proud of. She has evidently been thinking as well as reading. She is right. The bible is an awful book, especially the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, which would make a dog turn from his dinner. Hope she will favor us with another letter soon. I would like to read it to a lady who has been warmed over. Good luck and best wishes for the Blade and for the Paine Centennial. My thoughts will be with you, even if I can't.—ELLA P. HUNT.

Foolish, or Wise,—Which?

KANSAS.—Please find enclosed bank draft for \$3.00, which will fix the tab till next March. Have no apologies to make for being a "delink" except neglect. I mail you under separate cover three of those papers you asked for in last issue of the Blade. Do not want any pay for same. I give you my compliments with them.

Say, if Christians are right, is not this vast army of unbelievers very foolish in taking the chances they do? This question has been asked me, but as I never saw it in print, I want to see how you would answer it. Thanking you for the favors already shown me.—M. C. WEISDORFER.

About Taft's Election.

WASH.—The election of Taft for President was not a victory for liberalism, as many writers in the Blade seem to think, but a victory for capitalism. The fight is always for material interest, and Popes, Kings, Priests and Trust Magnates are forced to fight side by side, or vote or influence the votes for that candidate whom they know will do the bidding for their interest. Religion with them cuts no figure, except to use it to gain their ends. This is plainly shown by Taft going to Rome to shake hands with the Pope. In this age of machine production the great Trusts are but natural offspring, and men with great wealth are forced to put their capital together in these enterprises, for it is the only way they can use it to keep even and get interest and dividends. Thus we find that a Pope will trust his funds with a Morgan and a Morgan will do as well with the Pope as to any other. Thus capitalism becomes international, and will so continue until the wealth of the world is in a few hands. If the Pope lived in the United States of America and was a citizen, he could not have voted for any other Presidential candidate but Taft.

Presidents, Kings, Priests, National and State Legislatures are and can be nothing else but servants of international capital-

ism, as capitalism is the ruling power in the world. We don't expect any one to cut off their own interest and power. The Russian refugees in this country testify thereto.

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Volume XVII. Number 45

LEXINGTON, KY., MARCH 7, 1909

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HELEN HAMILTON GARDENER.

ORATOR, NOVELIST, AND FOREMOST AMONG FREE-THOUGHT WOMEN.

Who has not heard or read of Helen H. Gardener?

Without a thought or dream of name and fame this American woman has moved a continent to thought and reflection.

"Men, Women and Gods" was the title of one of her most famous works, and did we but consider the author alone we would be impelled to admit that the greatest of these was the woman who first penned the title.

Slight of frame, of delicate physique, with classical head and face, yet a strong, logical and vigorous thinker, her every mood a lesson, pure in thought as the polar snows, and self-poised as a star, she stands the admiration of every Freethinker in the civilized world, an inspiration to all who follow, and a beacon-light along the dark highways and by-ways that have been builded by theology.

Helen Hamilton Gardener was born in the valley of Virginia, at Stony Mead, near Winchester, in 1860, just before the outbreak of the Civil War. She was the youngest of six children. Radical as she afterwards became, it is a notorious fact that her father was a minister of the gospel, the Rev. A. T. Chenoweth. Her mother, Katherine A. Peel, was a descendant of the Robert Peel family, now famous in the political history of England. Owing to the existence of Southern institutions at the time of her birth, and just prior thereto, her parents inherited a number of slaves, but taking note of the abolition movement, and being deeply impressed therewith, they liberated their bondsmen and bondwomen, but created such a feeling of hostility by so doing that they moved to the North in order to avoid unpleasant difficulties. Thus it was that born of the South, Helen H. Gardener grew to womanhood among the people of the North, and her strong literary mind began to develop at a rather early age.

It is a safe assertion that no literary works published in the English, or any other language, have exercised such an influence upon the public mind as that of her two novels: "Is This Your Son, My Lord," and "Pray You, Sir, Whose Daughter." Both of these works dealt with the prevailing social system, the evils with which the young were beset, the traps for unwary feet, built by special legislation, carried into law by unthinking legislators. The sarcasm with which she exposes these brutal social shams had deep and wonderful effect. Her polished satire struck deep. Her intense earnestness appealed to all who heard her or read after her. She never juggled with words. At no period of her life did she ever try to conceal her thoughts. There is no heart so utterly unresponsive as would fail of being impressed by the striking thoughts of this heroic and remarkable woman.

It was in 1884 that Helen H. Gardener first became generally

known to the reading, thinking public of America. Her introduction came through a series of lectures she then delivered. Among these were "Men, Women and Gods," "Pulpit, Pew and Cradle," "Vicarious Atonement," "Rome or Reason," and others. All of the above named lectures were published in book form, and they reached an enormous sale. For the next six years she engaged in a vigorous work to enlighten the masses. She lectured frequently and many of her writings found their way into the columns of the best magazines of the country. In 1890 she published her first book of stories, entitled "A Thoughtless Yes," and this was soon followed by her clever composition, "Pushed by Unseen Hands." Then came "Facts and Fictions of Life" and "Sex in Brain." In 1894 came her latest, "An Unofficial Patriot," and like all others it soon wended its way into public favor. Many of her books, essays and stories have been translated into both French and German, so that her name and fame have spread into intellectual Europe. Russia and Japan have adopted some of them and the brilliant mind of this frail woman has gone to instruct the people of other countries as well as our own.

Of all the American magazines that sought for her literary productions most, was the Arena, edited and published by B. O. Flower, of Boston. Of her work, Mr. Flower said: "I know of no living writer who can carry home a great truth to the heart of the humblest reader so tellingly as Helen Gardener does in her stories and novels."

Helen Gardener lives in a glory all her own. She was not a creature of mere chance. The honors that fell upon her and belong to her she worked for, struggled for, and won. She was brilliant in wit and polished in diction. She was ever kind in her dealings with others, and always stood ready to lend a helping hand to the oppressed and distressed. Her pen, powerful in the extreme, was always and ever employed on the side of right, truth and human virtue. She assailed the shams of society with unfaltering logic. One purpose animated her life, her very being, and that was to rescue from and to uplift out of the trammels of superstition and vice, those of her own sex, and she was fearless in the defense of their rights and exposing the wrongs to which they were subjected by sanction of law.

Simple and unaffected, Helen H. Gardener lived the life she would have others live. In this she taught by example even stronger than by her written words. America has possessed but one such woman. Rich in oratory, her voice rung like the clarion notes of a bugle from the public rostrum, and as a writer she stands in a class by herself.

American Freethinkers have much to be thankful for in this brave, little woman, and in honoring her they do but honor themselves.

THE UNIVERSE vs. SPOOKS

AFFIRMATIVE ARGUMENT OF THE NON-EXISTENCE OF A GOD AND FUTURE LIFE. EXPOSITION OF PRINCIPLES OF MATERIALIST ASSOCIATION.

(By President Otto Wettstein, S. S. *)

Some seek the belief that best conforms to their vanity and ideas of comfort.

Materialists search for facts and truth, regardless of preferences and consequences. As Huxley said: "We are not here to enquire what we would prefer, but what is truth?"

The conflict between science and theism (including spiritism) is a contest between reality and mystery; between fact and fiction; between an immutable eternal order pervading nature, and caprice or miracle; between knowledge and inherited superstition; between everything and spooks.

Materialism is the science of all sciences—Monism, Ontology, Physics, Biology, Physiology, Chemistry, Astronomy, Psychology, Phrenology and others—all must be classified under the head of Materialism. If we confine our belief strictly to what we KNOW, to facts, truth and to what we can rationally infer, then we are Materialists.

"Materialism" not only implies oneness—nature ONLY in distinction from nature AND God, but also plainly defines what this unity consists of, viz: Matter. That is why "Monism" is objectionable—it might imply all is God, all is spirit, all is mind, or other superstitions. "Materialism" defines itself—"Monism" leaves the novice in doubt.

Materialism reduces the mysteries of nature and life to their minimum. Theism vastly augments the problem beyond hope of final solution. The mysteries of nature are great,—the mysteries of a God and spirits infinitely greater.

Materialism explains everything which has been, can and will be explained,—every phenomena, event, law, growth, activity, formation, process, etc., from tangible facts or, analogically, from what we KNOW. Theism explains nothing. The startling wonderful potencies of matter lately revealed to us by science, all confirm the truth that we must continue to seek in matter the sole causes of all cosmic activity and organic life.

The platform of Materialism is the Universe—the GREAT INFINITE ALL of existence. Theists monopolize the remainder—antediluvian tradition, infantile conceptions, absurd theories, miracles and spooks.

The infinite aggregate of cosmic phenomena necessitates infinite causes to produce them (the job is too big for a solitary agent or being, unless we admit of grotesque miracle and then argument ceases). These causes must exist in, or rather ARE THE MATTER which constitutes the phenomena. Science recognizes no extraneous forces, agents, artificers, gods or a "Great Dynamis" hovering around and manipulating matter by mind, volition or caprice. MATTER ALONE DOES IT. It produces, of its own inherent qualities, men and mice, constellations, and the delicate rose and forget-me-not.

The Materialist believes what every one knows or may know,—the Theist what nobody knows or can know.

When the Materialist explains the transition or evolution of inorganic matter to crudest organic forms—protoplasm—and this to cell or infusoria, he will have explained life. The well established facts of evolution explain the rest.

The Theist contrarily opens the bible and in Genesis ii:7 reads

—Superstition Smasher.

and insists that we must believe that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." And then complacently insists that intelligent men and women, familiar with the grandeur and facts of astronomy and the complex and delicate organism of man, must believe the infantile conception that a few thousand years ago God, in the image of man, yet the creator and ruler of countless gigantic incandescent bodies flying with inconceivable velocity through countless expanse, walking in a garden, in a few moments made a mature man out of dust—anatomy, flesh and blood, nervous and circulatory system, organs, brain, hair, teeth and all! I can only say with Puck, "What fools these mortals be!"

Astronomy is radically materialistic. No honest man can be familiar with the facts of nature, revealed by astronomy, and remain a Theist or spiritist. We KNOW there is no God on our earth, over the earth, between us and the moon—8,000 miles (it would cause an eclipse!)—between us and the sun—92,000,000 miles, or between us and Sirius—58,000,000,000 of miles away. We KNOW these colossal fiery bodies, and countless millions others, all sweeping with inconceivable velocity within their orbits, make life of any kind absolutely impossible within inter-stellar space. This knowledge, these facts, corroborated by all the astronomers in the world, consigns all heavens, hell (is not existence without both vastly preferable to existence with both?) spirit-worlds and spheres—also Bro. Maddock's "Great Dynamis" —to oblivion.

Theists entirely ignore the well known facts of nature,—that life primarily necessitates conditions favorable to life. Such conditions do not exist within inter-stellar space. If an infinitely extensive God or a "Great Dynamis" were introduced among this vast infinite system of soaring, burning cosmic bodies, these spooks would be instantly torn to fragments or incinerated.

Spiritists likewise ignore the prominent fact of nature that all organic forms are transient,—begin and end—are born and die. Yet they believe that all the dead (though the constituents of their bodies are scattered and absorbed by other forms) are still alive, duplicate men and women without physical bodies, shade of nothing, or what? Isn't it about time the S. P. R. would tell us what disembodied mortals are made of?

Physiologists and medical men KNOW that every bone, muscle, organ, artery and nerve is a necessity to the life of a perfect man. This physical structure IS the man; then how can we believe man can survive its destruction? We cannot even think of souls or spirits without first investing them with physical structure and material dry-goods.

Here spookists insist in reply that "Neither can we see electricity, yet are aware of its terrible potentiality." But there is no analogy between an inorganic force or fluid like electricity and organic spirit forms—the counterpart of man and woman. If not this—if transformed into gas, air or electricity—how can we again meet our beloved dead and hope to retain our own identity?

Souls or spirits must possess the form and functions of man, or there are none! But such forms and functions necessitate organic structure—flesh, blood, bones, brain, etc. In the absence of the latter the former is unthinkable.

Agnostics say: "It is impossible to prove there is no God; you cannot traverse an infinite universe in search of him." I do not have to search for him,—HE HAS TO COME TO ME! If he does not come to me, this alone proves there is no such a

being, because the primal attribute of "Deity" must be omnipresence. If then, God is not where I am, where you are, or where science has penetrated with its giant telescopes, then this proves conclusively that "He" is nowhere. To believe that such a being is everywhere, in spite of "His" invisibility, and in spite of our knowledge that life is impossible among suns and planets, is to prostitute our intellect and to believe in an infinite spook.

On the highway of reason—in the evolution of religious thought—there is no stopping place between Romanism and scientific Materialism. The agnostic should not be an agnostic BECAUSE HE IS AN AGNOSTIC. He reasons and pronounces the fundamental doctrines of Christianity unreasonable. He rejects the bible as authority and then has absolutely nothing to build a faith upon. Even the great but pious Gladstone conceded: "Unless you accept the testimony of the bible as conclusive, what evidence have you of God's existence and man's immortality?" But the bible stories our agnostic friend cannot accept. Then science beckons him to enter its glorious temple of facts, and

truth. Here among the records of sages and thinkers he may revel in the ecstasies of acquiring knowledge and aiding personally in the grandest of all work that of solving the great riddle of existence and life. If he persists in this noble work he will inevitably join the vanguard of modern thought—the Materialists Association—to substitute truth for error and to rid the world of superstition.

We affirm: There is no God and eternal life for the individual. There is absolutely no evidence to prove it. We deny as we do Mother Goose or the devil, because childish fable. We KNOW there is no God as we know there is no elephant in our office or parlor, or that twice two is not five. There are innumerable God ideals, varied as humanity itself—from an "Overruling Providence," "Great Dynamis," or "Heavenly Father," etc., etc., to little "Billiken" you can buy for a nickel in the stores—but all alike are childish conceptions, phantoms, conjectures, idols and POKES. (Sign the application blank on M. A. in another column and send to our Secretary.)

LaGrange, Illinois.

The Foolishness of Prayer

Merely a Lazy Man's Effort to Get Something for Nothing.

(By Channing Severance.)

Prayer found its origin in superstition, and only those afflicted with it in some form continue to believe in prayer and to pray.

No man who lives by the light of reason wastes any time in praying, for he knows that a universe run by unchangeable modes of motion, cannot be influenced by human wants or desires expressed in words, and then addressed to a phantom called God, that the imagination has created to account for dynamic forces.

The Christian Herald claims to be receiving many letters asking why prayers are seldom answered, which would indicate that intellectual forces are beginning to manifest themselves, although in the editor's reply such is not the case, for he seems to have softening of the brain or mental paralysis. His answer is weak, puerile and unsatisfactory. There is just one reason and only one why prayers are not answered:—there is nothing and nobody to answer them. Whether men pray to Jehovah or the new God Billiken, to a dead Jesus or an infinite spirit, the result is always the same—nothing doing. For 19 centuries the Christian has been praying, "O, Lord, give us this day our daily bread," but up to this date there has been none received from that source. On bended knee, with sanctimonious phiz and closed optics, he has appealed to the skies for help, relief and the good things of life; but from that direction nothing has come. Probably more agonizing prayers have

been uttered by drowning and ship-wrecked people than from any other cause; and yet no supernatural force has ever interfered to save life or bring relief. With piteous pleadings on their lips, they have always gone down to watery graves, where God and cultivate by use and exercise that strength of will and purpose which can be realized in no other way. If a man wants for in fire, flood and pestilence; in natural calamities of every kind, and in the presence of all the evils that afflict mankind, God has invariably failed to reveal himself or his power. Still people continue to believe and to pray, and these extravagantly absurd words attributed to Jesus, confront every reader of the New Testament: "And all things whatsoever, ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

A greater falsehood was never uttered; and any man making such an assertion today would find a quick and ready welcome in the Annanias Club. Of all the absurdities ever taught and accepted by gullible man, the power to get anything you want or need by praying for it, leads the list.

If this were true, as Jesus affirms it to be, Christians would need to know nothing except how to pray; and by working their mouths they could get food, clothing, shelter and everything needed for comfort and pleasure. Knowledge, science and human efforts would be needless, and one could readily accept the fool's philosophy: "Take no thought for the morrow," for with everything needed guaranteed by prayer, why should one be disturbed by fears of want? How many people we see even now, who declare they believe every word in the Bible, and yet not one of them ever got anything from supernatural forces by pray-

ing for it, or failed to find themselves in unpleasant circumstances when they did not plan and work for the morrow.

Such doctrines as Jesus taught are pernicious and demoralizing, and any man who believes in prayer is afflicted with loss of self-reliance and will-power for the moment one begins to lean on something or somebody in the struggle to exist, he weakens his forces and becomes timid and lacking in determination.

The man who does things relies on self, and cultivates by use and exercise that strength of will and purpose which can be realized in no other way. If a man wants to feel that he is the little end of nothing, let him sink into a state of passivity and begin praying; for there is no way more certain to insure weakness, vacillation, uncertainty and failure in life.

Prayer is the lazy man's attempt to get something for nothing, and every person that resorts to it for that purpose, or to secure anything beyond his reach, will find that he has been the victim of misplaced confidence.

Prayer may give relief to the mind the same as profanity does by relieving the pressure, but to use it for any other purpose is foolishness and folly.

Thanks for Papers!

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Subscribes and Donates.

ILLINOIS.—Enclosed please find draft for \$4.00, to pay for my subscription, expiring March 15th, next. Balance you may use for the benefit of the Blade, or for a poor subscriber.—S. PABST.

being, because the primal attribute of "Deity" must be omnipresence. If then, God is not where I am, where you are, or where science has penetrated with its giant telescopes, then this proves conclusively that "He" is nowhere. To believe that such a being is everywhere, in spite of "His" invisibility, and in spite of our knowledge that life is impossible among suns and planets, is to prostitute our intellect and to believe in an infinite spook.

On the highway of reason—in the evolution of religious thought—there is no stopping place between Romanism and scientific Materialism. The agnostic should not be an agnostic BECAUSE HE IS AN AGNOSTIC. He reasons, and pronounces the fundamental doctrines of Christianity unreasonable. He rejects the bible as authority and ~~the~~ has ~~absorbed~~ nothing to build faith upon. Even the great but pious Gladstone conceded: "Unless you accept the testimony of the bible as conclusive, what evidence have you of God's existence and man's immortality?" But the bible stories our agnostic friend cannot accept. Then science beckons him to enter its glorious temple of facts, and

truth! Here among the records of sages and thinkers he may revel in the ecstasies of acquiring knowledge and aiding personally in the grandest of all work—that of solving the great riddle of existence and life. If he persists in this noble work he inevitably join the vanguard of modern thought—the Materialist Association—to substitute truth for error and to rid the world of superstition.

We affirm: There is no God and eternal life for the individual. There is absolutely no evidence to prove it. We deny as we do Mother Goose or the devil, because childish fable. We KNOW there is no God as we know there is no elephant in our office or parlor, or that twice two is not five. There are innumerable God ideals, varied as humanity itself—from an "Overshadowing Providence," "Great Dynamis," or "Heavenly Father," etc., etc., to little "Billiken" you can buy for a nickel in the stores—but all alike are childish conceptions, phantoms, conjectures, idols and SPOOKS. (Sign the application blank of M. A. in another column and send to our Secretary.)

La Grange, Illinois.

The Foolishness of Prayer

Merely a Lazy Man's Effort to Get Something for Nothing.

(By Caanning Severance.)

Prayer found its origin in superstition, and only those afflicted with it in some form, continue to believe in prayer and to pray.

No man who lives by the light of reason wastes any time in praying, for he knows that a universe run by unchangeable modes of motion, cannot be influenced by human wants or desires expressed in words, and then addressed to a phantom called God, that the imagination has created to account for dynamic forces.

The Christian Herald claims to be receiving many letters asking why prayers are seldom answered, which would indicate that intellectual forces are beginning to manifest themselves, although in the editor's reply such is not the case, for he seems to have softening of the brain or mental paralysis. His answer is weak, puerile and unsatisfactory. There is just one reason and only one why prayers are not answered:—there is nothing and nobody to answer them. Whether men pray to Jehovah or the new God Billiken, to a dead Jesus or an infinite spirit, the result is always the same—nothing doing. For 19 centuries the Christian has been praying, "O, Lord, give us this day our daily bread," but up to this date there has been none received from that source. On bended knee, with sanctimonious phiz and closed optics, he has appealed to the skies for help, relief and the good things of life; but from that direction nothing has come. Probably more agonizing prayers have

been uttered by drowning and ship-wrecked people than from any other cause; and yet no supernatural force has ever interfered to save life or bring relief. With piteous pleadings on their lips, they have always gone down to watery graves, where God alone had power to save. And his record on the land is the same as on the water; for in fire, flood and pestilence; in natural calamities of every kind, and in the presence of all the evils that afflict mankind, God has invariably failed to reveal himself or his power. Still people continue to believe and to pray, and these extravagantly absurd words attributed to Jesus, confront every reader of the New Testament: "And all things whatsoever, ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

A greater falsehood was never uttered; and any man making such an assertion today would find a quick and ready welcome in the Annanias Club. Of all the absurdities ever taught and accepted by gullible mark the power to get anything you want or need by praying for it, leads the list. If this were true, as Jesus affirms it to be, Christians would need to know nothing except how to pray, and by working their mouths they could get food, clothing, shelter and everything needed for comfort and pleasure. Knowledge, science and human efforts would be needless, and one could readily accept the fool's philosophy: "Take no thought for the morrow; for with everything needed guaranteed by prayer, why should one be disturbed by fears of want? How many people we see even now, who declare they believe every word in the Bible, and yet not one of them ever got anything from supernatural forces by pray-

ing for it, or failed to find themselves in circumstances when they did not plan and work for the morrow.

Such doctrines as Jesus taught are pernicious and demoralizing, and any man who believes in prayer is afflicted with loss of self-reliance and will-power; for the moment one begins to lean on something or somebody in the struggle to exist, he weakens his forces and becomes timid and lacking in determination.

The man who does ~~thinks~~ relies on self and cultivates ~~by~~ us, and exercises that strength of will and purpose which can be realized in no other way. If a man wants to feel that he is the little end of nothing, let him sink into a state of passivity and begin praying; for there is no way more certain to insure weakness, vacillation, uncertainty and failure in life.

Prayer is the lazy man's attempt to get something for nothing, and every person that resorts to it for that purpose, or to secure anything beyond his reach, will find that he has been the victim of misplaced confidence.

Prayer may give relief to the mind the same as profanity does in relieving the pressure, but to use it for any other purpose is foolishness and folly.

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In a Spirit of Sarcasm

Pointed Questions Are Asked and Answers
Are Given by the Same Writer
in the Same Article.c

(By W. J. McS.

Having read your paper which was handed by one of your ungodly followers, I have come to the conclusion that while it is possible to find such blasphemous matter spread broadcast over our land, an angry god will send earthquakes, panics, famines and failures on our heads until we are crushed from the face of the earth.

For instance: San Francisco for years has been cursed more than any other city in the land, with Materialists, Atheists, Freethinkers, Modernists and Socialists, and in their sanctified security they clapped each other on the back while an angry and outraged god sent an earthquake, which swallowed them down before they had time to repent or say their prayers.

Yes, said the ungodly Materialists, but who did god destroy the churches, priests and ministers as well as all other religious institutions in the city, and spare the Chinese quarters, as well as allow most every Atheist, Materialist, and Socialist in the city to escape? But the answer is easy: A spirit of commercialism, graftism, and boodleism had taken hold of the religious people of that city to such an extent that they passed up the saving and salvation of heathen souls. They even refused to furnish funds which would make it possible for the Holy Fathers who are God's chosen on earth, to reach those benighted outcasts. So that God punished the Christians for being stingy and close-fisted, and gave the Chinamen and other undesirable vagabonds longer lease of life in hope that they would see the error of their ways and repented. We had a lesson from Italy a few days ago. For years we have been told that it was the most God-forsaken country of the earth, that when a Cardinal ventured on the streets of Rome a company of Italian soldiers were compelled to guard him from an ungodly mob. The Holy Father himself who is Christ's appointed agent on earth, is locked up in a dungeon like any plain drunk or common vagabond. I will quote William E. Curtis, writing to the Chicago Record-Herald from that country about two years ago. He said that the country was teeming over with atheists, socialists and anarchists; he said that the payment of Peter's pence was stopped in that country entirely. He said that the Holy Father was compelled to do anything and everything to

raise sufficient money to spread the Gospel of Christ. He said that two heads of St. Peter were on exhibition in the city of Rome; that it cost twenty-five cents to see one and ~~thirt~~ two cents in our money to see the other. Rival bands of monks have been carrying on these exhibitions since the eleventh century.

During all that time the monks in charge of each head have denounced each other in the bitterest language, each claiming their head was genuine and branding the other as a fraud, and those in charge as fakirs. He said that in the fifteenth century, the leading Catholics of the world appealed to the Pope. They said it was his duty to examine the heads and decide which was genuine. They said it was a disgrace to Christianity that the church itself should have two heads of St. Peter on exhibition in the city of Rome. For a long time the Pope hesitated to interfere, as the monks in charge of each head were a power in the church; so much so that each faction had its defenders in the College of Cardinals, so that no matter how he decided there was danger of a split in the church of God. But he finally decided to visit both temples and determine which was the real head of St. Peter. On the day appointed the citizens of Rome celebrated as never before; the buildings were all decorated; the army marched, and pilgrims came from all parts of the globe. The Pope entered the temple amidst the greatest of pomp and ceremony; he looked at the heads, and declared he would make his decision public next day, which he did. The historian says that he was the only Pope who was a natural-born humorist; he decided that both heads were genuine,—one being the head of Peter when a boy and the other when a man. So that each faction is still showing the head and doing business in the same old way.

Curtis says that for a thousand years small bags of earth have been sold from the grave of St. Peter to the pilgrims who visited Rome. He said that the earth never lasted more than a day, and that two men were hired to haul earth at night and fix up the grave for business the next morning. The Vatican itself is conducting the sale of the earth from the grave of St. Peter. Curtis in describing how "God forsaken and Christ deserted" Italians have fallen away from the church, said that he reached the city of Rome on a Saturday night for the especial purpose of attending High Mass at St. Peter's on Sunday. He left word with the hotel clerk to be called in time for High Mass, as well as an order

for a special attendant who could speak Italian and English, to accompany him; they got to the church, which is the largest in the world, having a seating capacity of 20,000, on time. Several priests were on the altar and a great many candles were lighted. Curtis said to his attendant that he wanted to attend High Mass, and was informed that this was the real thing. He asked where the congregation were, and was told that the seven men in that vast church were the congregation at High Mass in St. Peter's. He said that he interviewed the seven men after the service was over and found that six of them were tourists or sight-seers like himself; which shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that the poor benighted Italian is doomed beyond all hope of resurrection.

Now, sir, with the horrible lessons of San Francisco and Italy before your eyes and the additional deplorable fact that the people are none too good in Kentucky and that earthquake rumblings are of daily occurrence, and that we are being warned by an angry God and his chosen agents, day after day, is it not time for you and your ungodly followers to take count of stock, so to speak, and see "where you are at?" Do you wonder that an angry God opened the earth and buried the people of Italy when he saw the Holy Fathers, who are his chosen men on this planet, compelled to sell bags of dirt for a living? Why not state through the columns of your paper why no earthquake shock ever disturbed the Vatican or the city of Rome?

By the way, Mr. Editor, I see that you have been lecturing in different parts of the country, and I ask as a special favor that I be notified in case you speak at Peoria, Ill., as I want to go down to Pekin where the people have the fear of God in their hearts. Not wishing to take any chances of being swallowed down in this city, I will remain in Pekin until you have gone.

Peoria, Illinois.

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In a Spirit of Sarcasm.

Two questions are asked and answered
Are asked by the same writer
in the same article.

(By W. E. McSweeney.)

Having read your paper which was headed by one of your ungodly followers, I have come to the conclusion that while it is possible to find such blasphemous matter spread broadcast over the land, an angry god will send earthquakes, panics, famines and failures on our heads until we are crushed from the face of the earth. For instance: San Francisco for years has been cursed more than any other city in the land, with Materialists, Atheists, Freethinkers, Modernists, and Socialists, and in their wicked security they slapped each other on the back while an angry and outraged god sent an earthquake, which swallowed them down before they had time to repent or say their prayers.

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MAN'S ORIGIN AND DESTINY

ADMIRATION FOR THE MARTYR TO LIBERTY.—PITY FOR THE FANATIC WHO DIES FOR IMAGINARY CAUSES.
—REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES AS SHOWN BY HISTORY AND FACT.

(By Dr. A. Hausman.)

We don't see any other standard in history by which to measure the value of a nation, than the physical power, which however depends always on the peaceable development within a nation, equivalent to numerical increase and utilization of the natural forces. The invention of powder for instance, gave the European nations at once the supremacy over all other races. The highest state of civilization before the present era we find with the Greeks and after their downfall the Romans stand at the head of the world for some time. From the ruins of this mighty empire rose the gloomy, barbarous era of christianity, which ruthlessly destroyed most of what was left of the heathenish civilization. For fifteen hundred years the church ruled supreme and during this long time history is a record of idiocy and superstition. The great deeds are great crimes and follies, the monuments of christian humanity are the stake, the scaffold and the chamber of torture. Then began the age of reformation, characterized by the emancipation of part of the nations from the central power of the church at Rome, embodied in the person of the pope. Although superstition and fanaticism still remained, greater freedom was accorded individual opinion and scientific research which finally brought on a great change of ideas in regard to man's relation to nature, inaugurating the present era by whatever name it may be known to posterity.

As stated above, the deleterious effect of the false christian doctrines lies in rendering the people moral cowards and submissive slaves to those, who like the fetish man, take advantage of their faults for their own material benefit. It was the church and the ruling powers who profited by the helpless moral condition to which the belief in supernatural powers reduced the faithful subjects. Agnosticism was at the bottom in both cases, but while it assumed an irrational form among the ignorant, who surrendered the fruits of their labor, or even their life, from fear of hell, it was perfectly rational with the members of the church and the rulers on the throne, because they received real for imaginary value. But whatever may be our feeling in regard to the poor deluded slaves, we cannot help admitting that their oppressors were the abler of the two and the fitter to survive.

We hear of martyrs in the early days of Christianity and their heroic death is quoted as proof of the truth of the cause for which they died. If such a statement is true, the victim was a proof of its truth, the Buddhists of the Indians must be the truest of all religions, for these fanatics have cast themselves in great numbers before the carriage of the Juggernaut, to be crushed beneath its wheels.

is the dubious privilege of the divine man to sacrifice himself for an imbecility, of which the animal is incapable,—“More beastly than the beast,” says Goethe. Whatever may be true of these stories of martyrdom, fanaticism that leads to self-destruction or mutilation, is always a sign of a low intellectual standard, and is met with only among savages and the lowest classes of civilized nations; for instance, the Flagellantes in New Mexico. We can justly respect and admire a man who dies fighting for his country, family or liberty, but we can only pity the fanatic who dies for an imaginary cause.

That the mere change of form in the worship of the unknown powers, the only difference between heathendom and Christendom, did not effect a radical change in the moral faculties of the people, is demonstrated by the behavior of the Christians after they had attained the supremacy, about the fourth century. The innate barbarity and cruelty of that age was not eradicated and supplanted by nobler emotion with the adoption of the Christian rites, and the actions of the first Christians do not divulge any improvement in this respect. They destroyed with a rude hand the splendid monuments of art and the records of science, and baptized the heathen with fire and sword. They have no reason to be proud of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, who was a monster compared with his apostate successor. Instead of proving by their deeds that there was any truth in the doctrine of love, they quarreled continually among themselves and fought over the absurdest dogmas. It is quite edifying to read the history of the Popes, “the vicars of Christ” on earth. Among those who ruled during the first twelve hundred years were many who committed all crimes imaginable, murder, mutilation, incest, etc. so that it would be difficult to find a criminal now-a-days so thoroughly debased and bestialized as one of these high-to-lights of the church. That they were not of a milder disposition in later periods is shown by the horrors of the Inquisition, which, if not introduced by one of the Popes, was approved and assisted by them. Only since the Reformation they have become more humane, from the good reason that the people don't submit any longer to the charitable treatment of the church by fire and sword. A little harmless cursing is all that his holiness can indulge in today, and the only effect it has upon the intelligent people is to elicit a smile of contempt.

Two institutions are principally characteristic of the spirit of love and humanity prevailing in the Christian church,—the Inquisition and the persecution of witches. Imagine the scene of an “Auto-da-fe”, only three hundred years ago. In an open space are placed a number of posts

surrounded by piles of wood and fagots, and on the sides are erected tribunes for the spectators at the exhibition of Christian love. Under the ringing of bells the sad procession approaches the fatal spot; the condemned dressed in coarse garments, with paper caps on their heads, mockingly decorated with devils in glaring colors. Leading the procession march the disciples of Christ, the pious monks bearing the emblem of the church, the cross, and chanting hymns to the glory of god. Arrived at the spot, the victims are seized by the executioners, men, women and children tied to the stakes and the torches applied. How eagerly the Christian spectators strain their necks to feast their eyes upon the writhing and squirming victims in their terrible agony! How their ears enjoy the music of their frenzied shrieks of pain, dying off in the low moan of the death struggle, the welcome relief for the sufferer. They were all good Christians, the spectators, the executioners and the clergy—what was it that made their eyes blind against the intense sufferings of their fellow-men; their ears deaf against the cries of despair, and stifled the least emotion of sympathy in their breasts? Was the Christian religion, the cursed of an almighty god, with whose consent this fiendish work was done? What prompted the old woman to carry a bundle of fagots to the stake on which Huss was burned? Her faith in a powerful god, without whose consent her hair could fall from the head, much less one of his children be burned to death. Those who thoughtlessly repeat the stale, stupid lie of the humanizing tendency of Christendom, ought to be able to point out in what it consists, how and where it shows itself. Was Christianity dead for eighteen hundred years, or if not, where must we look for the Christian if there were none among the clergy, the government or the people? The fact is that these horrors were the natural outcome of the false teachings of Christianity. They indicate the culmination of Christendom, which, after fifteen hundred years of development, has reached the acme of its power, and from now begins to crumble under the blows of the Reformation.

Supposing some fanatics would attempt an "Ino-da-fe" today, what would be the result? People of all creeds, infidels, Protestants, Jews and Catholics would join to prevent it. Even the Catholics? Yes, though their religion is still the same as at the time of the Inquisition, they are not the same people; they could not help yielding to the progressive spirit of the times, in spite of their religion. Still the spirit of fanaticism is smouldering under the ashes, and there are zealous Catholics among the ignorant peasants in European countries who would not object to roasting a heretic alive, and what might be expected from the higher clergy we must infer from their own words. In the American Review of October, 1880, we find a reply of Robert G. Ingersoll to Cardinal Manning in a controversy over the Catholic religion, especially to a statement made by the Cardinal that "the greatest statesmen and rulers the world has ever seen are the Popes of Rome." Ingersoll

replies, which is summarized by every one and shocking immorality imaginable. Since the persecution of heretics, Jews and witches reached its culmination only shortly before the Reformation, we see that the Popes had not improved in the meantime. If the Cardinal considers the vilest of criminals as his models of rulers, the world has reason to rejoice that the time has passed forever when the church had power to carry out its alleged mission on earth.

The persecution of witches belongs under the same category as the Inquisition. Fear of the unknown powers forms the mental impulse of all these atrocities, and the Christian nations stood in this respect exactly upon the same level with the lowest African tribes of today. These latter kill the person pointed out by the fetish-men (of course his enemies) as witches; they sacrifice others to propitiate the offended evil spirits; they tie their daughters to trees to be eaten alive by the vultures in order to procure rain. The Christians did the same only three hundred years ago. They tortured young girls still in their teens, and venerable matrons bent with age, and burnt them on the stake when something natural happened, an epidemic broke out, or some other calamity befell the place which was attributed to the evil influences of the witches. And note not the Catholics alone that perpetrated these cruelties; the Protestants did not stand behind in relentless persecution of innocent people.

The details of these witch trials are revolting and disgusting in the extreme. Just think of a young girl in the bloom of youth, stripped naked before a court of Christian judges, strapped on the rack, the ropes cutting deep into the flesh, the joints being torn out of their sockets. Outside a multitude of Christians listens to the piercing shrieks of agony, but they evoke no echo of compassion in their breasts. Religion, the belief in an almighty god who was responsible for all that happened, made them deaf against the cries of despair and smothered the least stir of humane feeling. What would the people do today if they knew a witch was being tried in the court house? Would they stand idle and listen indifferently to the heart-rending appeals for help, trusting in the almighty god, without whose will his child could not be hurt? No, they would consider it their duty to interfere, and this sense of duty would be so powerful that nothing but superior force could prevent them from rescuing the prisoner, and perhaps attacking the court. What this difference between then and now? Because the people have less faith in god and more in themselves.

We see that the civilized nations have made some progress in regard to the treatment of heretics and witches, simply because the fanatics that would still like to destroy them are in the minority. But we have some other institutions, a legacy from our ancestors, the animals, which can not be abolished all at once, but will be greatly改良ed as more and more numbers have advanced far enough.

(Continued on Page 52)

BLUE GRASS BLADE

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ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BLUE GRASS BLADE
P. O. Box 393, Lexington, Ky.

ETERNAL LIFE.

Who is there who can possibly hope for, expect or desire eternal life?

The very thought of eternal life is fearful to contemplate. No end. No rest. Nothing but eternal life and motion. Argued to its logical end it is more fearful than eternal sleep,—annihilation. There is something peaceful, restful in sleep. Eternal sleep must mean eternal peace. Eternal life must mean eternal conflict, for all life, in any form, is a conflict, a struggle.

It may be true that the ignorant desire for immortality gave rise to the belief in such a doctrine, but belief, or desire, proves nothing. If there be no god, if there be no life beyond the grave, all the expressed beliefs of all the ages, will not put gods on High Olympus, nor discover a new bourne for the weary travelers of earth. If god does not exist and if there be a land of perennial bliss, then all the unbelief in the universe could not change that fact, and they would still be, did the whole universe deny them.

The dream of Christian immortality is not an original conception. Nor did it come to them from the Jews, altogether, though the Jews furnished them with the material out of which their system of faith was built. Prior to the Babylonian captivity, the Jews did not believe in a future state of existence. To them the grave was the

be-all and the end-all. The grave was the actual and the positive close. Just as the negro race, brought to America in slavery, mere barbaric savages without the means of intelligent communication, and by association with the white race acquired and assimilated the art of intelligent speech, traits of civilization, and learned some of the facts of society and the social contracts so did the Jews, by association with the Babylonians, a people of superior intellect, acquire and assimilate new religious conceptions, and we now find them beginning to evince a belief in some sort of a future life. We have but to turn to some of the pessimistic passages of the old testament to be convinced of these facts. History reveals the great influence of a stronger race upon a weaker people. The weaker intellect must fall before the presence of the stronger. And so the Jews, but mere barbarians, imitating their superiors, ultimately came to believe in and began to teach the doctrine of future life.

From this very fact, the fact of a non-belief in a future life by the Jews, individually and as a race, one of the main favorite arguments of orthodox advocates is shattered, namely, that all races and nations of men have believed in a future life of some character. Here were the Jews with absolute ~~no~~ such belief and this fact will have to be explained by the orthodox professors before reiterating the argument.

Once a future life became an element of orthodox worship it would appear that every other religious system, or the leaders thereof entered into some sort of an agreement thereon, with slight variations. The Buddhist believes in Nirvana, the acme of perfection, and constant re-incarnation to a higher or lower state according to the account of good or bad deeds performed. The Buddhist has no hell. In this he is immensely superior to the Christian. None but a Christian deity could create a lake of burning fire and brimstone in which to torment the creature whom he had made. The Mohammedan believes in a paradise wherein, if he acquire it, he is surrounded forever with black-eyed houris, in perfect *dolce far niente* through all eternity. The Christian invented both a heaven and a hell. Bliss in one and blisters in the other. Its heaven is a place of barbaric fancy. Its hell a disgrace to those who preach it. According to this idea, the moment man hits the globe he starts on a trot for the grave, at the end of which heaven or hell awaits him, and for more than forty years I have been striving to determine which of these two evils we should seek to avoid. Col. Ingersoll once said that while heaven may have the best climate, hell enjoyed the best and most intellectual society, and as a man's character is usually judged by the company he keeps I would prefer hell, if preference be given me.

There is a good story told of an incident said to have occurred during the civil war. From out the mad hell of that fight a wounded hero was brought. His life hung by a narrow, slender thread. He was carried to the hospital and placed in the care of a nurse, one of those

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 P. O. Box 392

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If Romans, nursed by a she-wolf, became demi-gods, think what our American citizenship would be in sprung from the loins of such a woman.

• SOME CURRENT STATISTICS

The total church membership in the United States, as furnished by Dr. Carroll, of New York, do not show much for the actual growth of the church, but would suggest that as the population increases the church is rapidly falling behind. Even this much is admitted by the compiler of the statistics. A decided decrease is shown as against the figures given for 1860 and 1870. The figures for each denomination, omitting the so-called Christian Scientists and the Spiritualists, are as follows:

Catholic	3,399,733
Methodist	8,830,773
Baptist	5,413,965
Lutheran	2,082,700
Presbyterian	1,237,559
Disciples of Christ	295,423
Episcopal	23,562
Reformed	432,246
Latter-Day Saints	399,500
United Brethren	306,269
Evangelical	177,416
Jewish	143,000
Quaker Brethren	122,332
Friends	19,178

Close figures would show, at least, that the church is at a standstill in point of membership. The indication, then, is that it has reached its zenith, and beyond a few spasmodic spurts there will follow a general decline in the next few years.

This is worth striving for, working for, toiling for. Remember the total population is now about 84,000,000.

AN ECHO OF THE DEBATE.

From reports received by the Blade, both public and private, it is made to appear that there is considerable of an aftermath connected with both the debates in which I indulged during my last trip through Ohio.

It will be recalled that the first of these was with Leander S. Keyser, pastor of the English Lutheran church, at Canal Dover, and that I met him on his own ground; and the other was with Rev. — McVey, a Campbellite preacher, with no church, whom I met at McConnellsburg, also on his own ground.

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Upon the opening night of the Canal Dover debate, Rev. — Kennedy, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church at Canal Dover, was the presiding moderator, and he was present in the interest of Mr. Leyser. It became his duty to make the opening statement. He did so, and announced the subject under discussion, the terms and conditions of the contest. During his preliminary remarks he referred to the fact that an admission fee was being charged for the debate, and while I may not remember his precise words or language used, it was, in substance, as follows:

"There has been some criticism about the charge being made for an admission fee, but I wish to say that the Committee alone are responsible for it, and the speakers had absolutely nothing to do with it. The Committees had to secure this opera house, stand responsible for the renting, assume the cost of advertising, and the other incidental expenses, and without regard for the speakers the committees decided upon making the charge. I say this in justice to the speakers."

Following this, Mr. Keyser was introduced, and in his prefatory remarks, he not only confirmed what Mr. Kennedy had said about the committee and the admission fee, but reiterated it with considerable force and vehemence. At the time both gentlemen made these statements, I knew they were untrue. My mind pondered upon the subject for a few moments, but I finally resolved to make no further mention thereof for the reason that I had agreed with Mr. Keyser that there should be no personal allusions made by each toward the other, and I feared that any criticism I might offer connected with the statement might be construed into a personal attack upon Mr. Keyser; therefore, I declined to say one word on the subject. Here I made a ~~silence~~, temporarily.

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Catholic	12,394,731
Methodist	6,838,779
Baptist	5,413,945
Lutheran	2,082,760
Presbyterian	1,831,854
Disciples of Christ	1,295,423
Episcopal	893,672
Reformed	432,248
Latter Day Saints	399,500
United Brethren	300,269
Evangelical	177,416
Jewish	143,000
Dunkard Brethren	122,332
Friends	119,176
Total	32,445,411

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me, personally, and my committee, with being solely responsible for the admission fee being charged, and stated to the audience that he and his committee wished to make the admission free. His followers applauded him vociferously for this statement.

My turn came, however, when I directed the attention of the audience, or so many thereof who were present the first night, to what both Mr. Keyser and Mr. Kennedy had said, to the effect that "the speakers had absolutely nothing to do with it" and that the "committees were alone responsible for the admission charges" and an immediate change came over that vast assembly. I further called attention to the fact that Mr. Keyser had written me a letter in which he had agreed with me that an admission fee should be charged, and the profits, if any, divided equally between us, adding that he "could use a little extra money", and wherein he further suggested that my travelling and hotel expenses should be allowed me before a final division of the proceeds was made. This was before the committees had met, and before Dr. Keyser had actually appointed the committee to represent him. Mr. Keyser, holding up his hand as if to invoke his god as a witness, declared to that audience that he had not written such a letter to me. I did not know whether I had preserved the letter or not. I promised, however, that if, upon my return home, I could find that letter I would send it to Canal Dover, and my friends could see that it was published.

In a few days after I had left a report had reached me that Mr. Keyser had sought to prevent the publication of the letter, if I succeeded in finding it. This was before I had reached home. I then resolved that it should not be published if it was calculated to work any injury upon Mr. Keyser, for while my own friends were satisfied with the truth of my position, the followers of Mr. Keyser need know aught to the contrary, and I had no desire to cause any suffering to him, his wife and children.

Arriving home, I searched through the letters and papers in my desk, with the result that I found the letter in question, and I immediately mailed it to Mr. Walter C. Hardesty, placing it in his hands, telling him my views thereon, and leaving the matter of its publication to himself and my friends in Canal Dover. Newspaper clippings sent to the Blade office show that the letter was published, and that Keyser's friends have also written and published comments thereon, favorable to him, which Mr. Hardesty has answered in my behalf.

In justice to Mr. Keyser, it must be said that while the letter thus published did contain a statement that he "could use a little extra money," which he so vehemently denied having written, it further stated that he was willing to do his part in the debate without any remuneration, but would leave that matter to the committee. The fact is, that Mr. Toomey, without any consultation with me, had agreed with Mr. Keyser that an admission should be charged, and at the time of this agreement my committee, which was appointed first, had not even been named. My

correspondence with Mr. Keyser followed, in which we agreed upon it, and then the committee took it up.

The friends of Mr. Keyser overlook one important fact, in their criticisms, namely, that both Mr. Keyser and Mr. Kennedy had declared that the speakers had "absolutely nothing to do with it," and that the committees alone were responsible. The publication of the letter ought to be sufficient to disprove such a statement. For my part, I KNOW that the speakers, Mr. Keyser and myself, the principals, did agree upon the admission fee being charged, and that the committees, who were simply agents, had nothing to do but to ratify the agreement their principals had made.

Under ordinary circumstances, such a matter might appear of trifling a character to demand such attention, but as it is a matter of such interest in Canal Dover, and as my personal honor and the integrity of my friends are at stake in this controversy, it seemed it advisable to restate these facts through the Blade columns.

In any event, it is clear that neither of the preachers named told the truth on the first night of the debate. The purpose of their statements was, evidently, to shield Mr. Keyser, but that they had to include me therein. Just why the matter should have been injected into the debate does not present itself unless it was an effort to save Mr. Keyser from criticism by his church membership. That both went too far must now be conceded, and this is a vindication of my position. The publication of the letter, and the known events of the debate show the following:

1. That both Mr. Keyser and Mr. Kennedy misstated the facts on the first night of the debate.
2. That Mr. Keyser did write a letter saying that he could use a "little extra money."
3. That the speakers did arrange for the admission fee and that the committees were not responsible.

MORAL TRAINING.

Plant vines early and give it the best possible cultivation.

Better and more attractive gardens would result if mankind could only be induced to give the flower the same, or an equal chance they suffer to the weed.

As a general rule, it must be admitted, that the minds of the majority of men are but congeries of maxims, notions, opinions, rules and theories they have managed to pick up at various times and in different places. Few of these are sound, the bulk of them unsound. Sometimes they are not consistent with each other, but for the lack of better means, these form the mental standards by which all things are tried. As it is easier to build on vacant ground than on a site already occupied by ruins, so the priest and preacher conspire to subject the young and innocent mind to the inculcation of false moral concepts, by furnishing false incentives and placing morality upon an unsafe foundation.

In a foot-note to his poem on Italy, John Rogers wrote, "To judge at once of a nation, we have only to throw our eyes on the markets and the fields." The inference is, that if the markets are well supplied and the fields well cultivated, all is well. And the converse must be equally true. Were the markets and fields otherwise, we would be apt to infer that the people were either barbarians or under some sort of oppression. So it is with the individual. The mind, which is but the combined mentality, may be regarded as the field upon which the highest virtue may be cultivated, and the brain, which is the organ of thought, may be considered the market to which the mind brings its best products. As the nation may be judged in the manner indicated, so may the individual. The very thoughts expressed are an index to the extent of cultivation given to the mind, and from them we are able to determine the quality of the thought-seeds planted therein. If we could have the tree fling its branches wide and free, its roots must be fixed deep and firm. So it is with the flower of human virtue. Plant it firmly in the mind while it is yet young. Water it from the fountain of truth. Do not intentionally deceive a child. One deception will breed another. For the mind to reason to certain truths it must have in it the principles of truth. For the mind to lean ever towards purity and virtue it must have a virtuous foundation to begin work on.

If there is any system of instruction calculated to injure the infantile mind, to warp it into unnaturalness, it is that coming from theology. All such instruction is like the twilight, which, holding the day in one hand and the night in the other, mocks the senses with distorted appearances which a thicker darkness would hide, and a broader daylight dispel. Virtue is presented in a wondrous garb. It is not taught along with firm, personal resolve. Penitence to sin and a blood atonement are the principal elements given. Is it any wonder that virtue has failed to find a home near cloistered walls. Uproot the dogma! The very fabric of our social being is held together only by virtuous law. Those who violate it are moral bankrupts, and mental bankruptcy flourishes most on so-called consecrated ground.

As the tree is inclined, in that direction in which the twig is bent, so the earliest training of the mind shapes its destiny. Then be sure to plant virtue early and cultivate it thoroughly.

Between a number of advisers, we believe we have a fairly good solution of the Correspondence School problem, which we will discuss later.

If the preachers were really sincere in their pretended efforts to eradicate sin and crime, they would welcome the Blade as an ally; as it is, they condemn and thereby expose their faults.

Chief Justice Ricks, of the Illinois Supreme Court, in a

recent decision in an insurance case, reviewed the extent to which insurance protection was being carried on today, and remarked that indemnities were guaranteed against loss through "acts of god." Judicially speaking, Justice Ricks is correct, but it is mighty bad theology. Imagine man insuring his fellow-man against loss caused by the act of deity. Why should a wise and beneficent deity cause mortal man to suffer loss? Cyclones, earthquakes, tornados, lightning are denominated acts of god in insurance circles.

The man who spends his money doing good while he is alive gets a great deal more satisfaction out of it than the man who leaves his wealth to a doubtful posterity.

The man who has lived so that he does not fear death has more than half solved the problem of life.

When a man or woman is willing to tell the exact truth to the tax assessor they stand a fair show of getting on the right side of St. Peter.

For some preachers to proclaim that they know their own minds would indicate that they have very little to boast about.

Will the Blade readers and friends of Freethought in both Indiana and Illinois who can arrange for lectures communicate with the Blade office. The Editor is contemplating taking that trip some time in April or May. We have Muncie and Covington, Ind., and Peoria, Ill., already on the list.

Orthodoxy detests nothing so much as criticism of itself.

It is impossible to direct humanity to right conduct through fear.

The Christian leopard has been considerably tamed, but its spots remain unchanged. It is the same old animal.

The fiercer the competition between the Salvation through-lines, the higher goes the cost of the fare.

Profiting by the lessons of experience, we have made ample provisions for a prospective bound volume of the Blade for 1899.

According to a recent ruling of the Interstate Commerce Commission, preachers are yet to be accounted as members of the privileged class, in that the law prohibiting the furnishing of free transportation by railroad companies, is held not to be applicable to them. In other words, preachers can still enjoy immunity and travel free or for children's fare. What is the use of being a parson unless you can get a rake-off?

Man's Origin and Destiny

(Continued from Page 7.)

in reason to understand their true causes. These are the standing armies and the hereditary monarchies. Originally the result of personal merits, the dignity and power of a ruler became hereditary and entirely independent of the personal qualifications of the successor. In consequence of this arrangement the wars, instead of being merely defensive, assumed the character of personal affairs, and thousands of fools sacrifice their life cheerfully under the delusion that wars are sent by god: they are Christians. But this subject we must reserve for the future, and return for the present to history, to investigate by what agencies mankind was extricated from a condition more "beastly than the beast," which found its actual expression in the cultivation of religious rites, cruel refined murder and wholesale slaughter. We found that Christendom simply meant a relapse into a state of barbarism after the destruction of ancient civilization, from which at last sprung a new era of culture, which is just being ushered into the world. As the first sign of progress, we encounter the Reformation, the culminating point of a movement against the church that had been going on for a long time, but had not sufficient strength to assert its claim. Heretofore, every attempt to cast off the iron yoke of the church had been promptly squelched by the customary methods of fire and sword, but now the dissenters had grown numerically strong enough to maintain their independence against the church of Rome, after long and bloody wars. However, reformation alone would never have led the people to freedom and intelligence, but by breaking the obnoxious power of the church, it opened the road to free thought and scientific research.

Science was not quite dead. A spark of truth was still glimmering under the ruins of the heathenish temples, carefully guarded by the church, and quenched whenever it threatened to burst into a flame. At last, the spirit of time fanned it into a bright blaze, which could not be extinguished any longer, and is now rapidly consuming the rotten, tottering structure of the church. There are many religions, and they are always changing, but there is only one truth and one science and it never changes. The facts remain the same; our knowledge of their relations may change. But any truth, mathematically established, can never change. The Pythagorean theorem, discovered about 500 years B. C., is as true today as on the date of its discovery.

From the fifteenth century dates the beginning of our modern sciences, the invention of the printers art being the first important step of incalculable value for the dissemination of new ideas. Honest men commenced scanning the heavens in search of truth, and discovered the true relations of the planets and the sun, destroying the false-conceited idea of the central position of the earth. To

Copernicus the world is indebted for laying the foundation of the most sublime of all sciences, astronomy, perfected and augmented through the labors of Tycho de Brahe, Galileo and Kepler. The knowledge of our earth's surface was increased by the voyages of bold travellers, such as Columbus, Vasco de Gama, Magellan, etc., who crossed the unknown oceans and discovered and explored new continents. Under many difficulties, arose the science of anatomy, at first confined to the coarser structures; but after the invention of the microscope in the seventeenth century, lead to the discovery of the true element of the human body, the cell. The discovery of the primitive elements, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, etc., gave origin to a new science, chemistry, which soon threw a new light on the composition and real character of the bodies. Physics, botany, mineralogy, geology, zoology and other natural sciences sprung up after the dark night of superstition and lie in which the church had shrouded the human intellect, had been dispelled by the Reformation. A gradual change of ideas took place as a natural sequence of the better understanding of the natural forces. Astronomy taught the true cause of the eclipses, which ceased to be feared as the work of the devil or a token of the wrath of the dreaded god. The appearance of a comet with its fiery tail did no longer spread dismay and consternation as a herald of war and pestilence. No longer were innocent persons persecuted for disasters caused by the elements, and honest men for telling the truth. In proportion as the knowledge of nature increased, was the Christian, which more and more deprived of his power, until his image has vanished in the inconceivable infinity of space. Astronomy discovered fixed laws regulating the movements of the planets, instead the caprices of a human god. Physics, chemistry, etc., showed the same laws of the universe as the cause of all the natural phenomena on earth. At last, there remained a problem which apparently could not be solved without presuming the action of a supernatural power, the origin of man; nor is it surprising that science was unable to lift the veil of mystery which hung over the cradle of mankind, until at a recent date. We learned to define man as a culmination of a physical process, continuing on the surface of the earth since millions of years, called life, the result of the physical forces in operation on the surface of the earth. His complicated relations could not be understood without collecting a correspondingly large number of facts, as represented in the auxiliary branches of science which are all based upon the same common laws we know, and undoubtedly others we do not know. We required geology to understand the series of successive types on a progressive scale; we needed chemistry to demonstrate that man is made of the same stuff as the earth and the rest of the animals. The anatomy of both had ~~been~~ advanced before the relative value of

the physiological organs could be determined by comparison. Without the improved modern microscope it would have been impossible to detect the minute cells the fundamental element of organic life, and prove the common origin of all animals from this small body. And lastly, we cannot join all these factors into a harmonious structure without the biological laws, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to the ingenious and truthful observations of Charles Darwin.

We have recognized as the basis of society egoism, or the instinct of self-preservation, and as the only law in nature physical force, which presumption was fully confirmed in the manner in which the transformation of ideas and actions resulting from the altered mental impulse,

which we call progress, was effected. Every social institution must be of benefit for some persons, or it would not exist. We saw how the fetish-man took advantage of the stupidity of his fellow savages for his material interest. Later on the church followed his example, and there is no doubt that avarice and cupidity played an important part during the persecutions of heretics and witches, disguised under religious zeal. It is the same with the institution of hereditary monarchy. The material interest of many persons depends on it, and they are striving to maintain it from purely egotistical motives. How the church fought for the material emoluments derived from its privileges, is testified by bloody wars, recorded in history.

(To be continued.)

The Blade's Correspondence

Willing to Do His Part.

VIRGINIA.—You are having troubles of your own, so I am not going to bother you with mine. I am hard up. Sorry I can't send you \$5 to take me up to October, 1902, in this letter. I will send you at least \$1.50 and all if I possibly can the latter part of March.—C. A. FAUSNET.

Very Welcome Letter.

KANSAS.—Enclosed you will find two dollars (money order), for which you will please send to me the Bound Volume of the Blue Glass Blade Ship when convenient to you.

The new commandments are all right. Wish there were more to follow them. The little girl Anna Hoglin, bless her life! she has a mind to be proud of. She has evidently been thinking as well as reading. She is right. The bible is an awful book especially the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, which would make a dog turn from his dinner. Hope she will favor us with another letter soon. I would like to read to a lady who has been warming over. Good luck and best wishes for the Blade and for the Paine Centennial. My thoughts will be with you, even if I can't.—ELLA HUNT.

Foolish, or Wise?

KANSAS.—Please find enclosed bank draft for \$6.00, which will fix the tab till next March. Have no apologies to make for being a "delink" except neglect. I mail you under separate cover three of those papers you asked for in last issue of the Blade. Do not want any pay for same. Give you my compliments with them.

Say, if Christians are right is not this vast army of unbelievers very foolish in taking the chances they do? This question has been asked me, but as I never saw it in print I want to see how you would answer it. Thanking you for the favors already shown me.—M. C. WEISDORFER.

WASH.—The election of Taft for President was not a victory for liberalism, as many writers in the Blade seem to think, but a victory for capitalism. The fight is always for material interest, and Popes, Kings, Priests and Trust Magnates are forced to fight side by side, or vote or influence the votes for that candidate whom they know will do the bidding for their interest. Religion with them is but a figure, except to use it to gain their ends. This is plainly shown by Taft going to Rome to shake hands with the Pope. In this age of machine production the great Trusts are but natural offspring, and men with great wealth are forced to put their capital together in these enterprises. For it is the only way they can use it to keep even and get interest and dividends. Thus we find that a Pope will trust his funds with a Morgan and a Morgan will do as well with the Pope as with any other. Thus capitalism becomes international, and will so continue until the wealth of the world is in a few hands. If the Pope lived in the United States of America and was a citizen, he could not have voted for any other Presidential candidate but Taft.

Residents, Kings, Priests, National and State Legislatures are and can be nothing else but servants of international capital-

ism, as capitalism is the ruling power in the world. We don't expect any one to cut off their own interest and power. The Russian refugees in this country testify thereto.

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